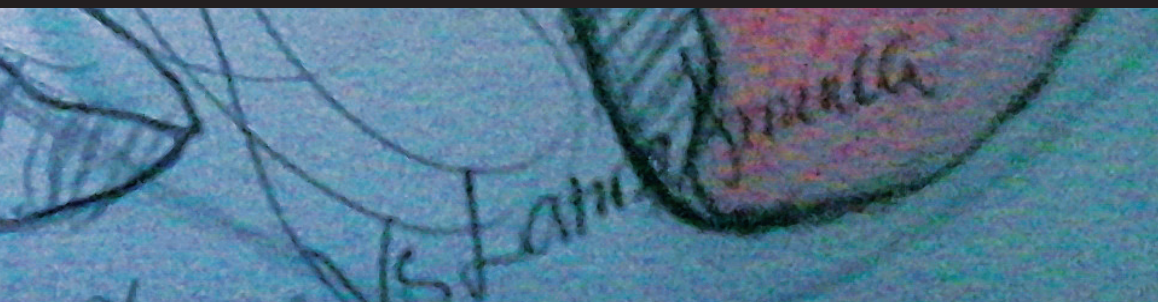




Writing Grandmothers
Escribiendo sobre nuestras raíces

Africa Vs Latin America, Volume 2
África contra América Latina, Volumen 2

EDITED BY TENDAI RINOS MWANAKA AND
RODRÍGUEZ RICARDO FÉLIX



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Writing Grandmothers: Escribiendo sobre nuestras raíces:

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Africa Vs Latin America, Volume 2
África contra América Latina, Volumen 2

**Edited by: Tendai Rinos Mwanaka
Ricardo Felix Rodriguez**



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About The Editors

Tendai Rinos Mwanaka is a publisher, editor, mentor, thinker, literary artist, visual artist and musical artist with over 20 books published. He writes in English and Shona. His work has appeared in over 400 journals and anthologies from over 27 countries, translated into Spanish, Serbian, French and German. Find some of his books here: <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/authors-editors/tendai-rinos-mwanaka>.

Rodríguez Ricardo Félix was born 1975 in Caborca, Sonora, Mexico. He studied psychology and has a Master's degree in social science with emphasis in health. He has written theatre, short stories, essays and film reviews. He has recently published a collection of short stories named "The surreal adventures of Dr. Mingus" and "As maçãs de Asgard" for an anthology in Sao Paulo, Brasil. He likes to write in different languages such as Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, German and Italian. "I consider myself a creator of images, actions, characters wrapped in an absorbent reality".

Bio Notes of Contributors/Notas Biográficas De Los Autores

Adjei Agyei-Baah is a lecturer and translator at the University of Ghana School of Distance Education, Kumasi Campus, and teaches Academic Writing and Literature related courses. He is also the co-founder Africa Haiku Network and Poetry Foundation Ghana, and currently serves as the managing co-editor of *The Mamba*, Africa's first international haiku Journal. He is widely anthologized, won several international awards and had his works recently cited by Professor Wole Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel Prize laureate for literature at *The*

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1st Asian Literature Festival 2017 in Gwangju, South Korea. Adjei is an author of 4 haiku collections: *AFRIKU* (2016), *Ghana 21 Haiku* (2017), *Piece of My Fart* (2018), *Tales of the Kite* (2018) and looks forward to publishing his first long verse collection *Embers of Fireflies* in 2019.

Santiago J Alonso: Nació en Buenos Aires en 1979. Es escritor, artista plástico y licenciado en Letras (U.B.A). Es investigador en el Centro Cultural de la Cooperación, donde coordina el ciclo Foros del Espacio literario Juan L. Ortiz en la SADE. Sus poemas fueron incluidos en *Poesía bajo la autopista 3* (Clara Beter, 2015). Dos dibujos suyos fueron incluidos en el libro digital de Eduardo Stupia y Cintia Mezza, *Dibujo Contemporáneo en la Argentina*, (Itaú Cultural, 2015). Ilustró el libro de Rodolfo Alonso *Piedra libre* (Kalos, 2016). Su obra teatral *La visita de los cuerpos (parodia de una parodia)* se representó, bajo la dirección de Claudio Gatell, en el Centro Cultural de la Cooperación (2017). Principales exposiciones individuales: *Paisaje adentro*, seleccionado por Luis Felipe Noé y Eduardo Stupía para *La línea piensa*, Centro Cultural Borges, 2011; *Obras 2012/2014*, Galería Arcimboldo, 2014; *Texturas de Nuestra América*, Centro Cultural de la Cooperación, 2015. Fue seleccionado por la Asociación de Galerías de Arte para Expotradiendas, 2009. Formó parte de muestras colectivas en el Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Latinoamericano, La Plata. 2005; Asociación Estímulo de Bellas Artes, 2008; Galería Chez Vautier (seleccionado por Eduardo Stupía), 2010; Centro Cultural Borges, 2011. Poseen obras suyas: Museo Leopardi, Recanati, Italia, y Centro Cultural Borges. Colabora en revistas nacionales y extranjeras, como *Kranear* y *Excéntrica* (ambas de Buenos Aires) y *Archipiélago* (México D.F.). Es miembro del Frente de Artistas y Trabajadores de las Culturas (FAyTC) y de la Sociedad Argentina de Escritores (SADE).

Gloria Mendoza Borda (Perú - 1948) Publicó 14 libros de poesía. Traducida al italiano por Gladys Basagoitia, al alemán por el poeta Rainer Maria Gassen. El 15 de diciembre del 2015 el Congreso de la República le dio un reconocimiento por su aporte a la poesía.

Participa invitada a países de Latino América como Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Buenos Aires, al norte, centro y sur de Chile, presentando sus libros, dando conferencias, participando en mesas redondas. El primero de abril del 2017 –mes de las letras- el GREMIO de Escritores del Perú le dio una distinción especial por su aporte a la cultura peruana en la Casa de la Literatura Peruana. Promotora Cultural. En mayo del 2017 el Estado Peruano mediante el Ministerio de Cultura, la distinguió con la Medalla de Oro y diploma declarándola Personaje Meritorio de la Cultura Peruana. Promotora cultural

Recaredo Silebo Boturu (Bareso, 1979) es poeta, dramaturgo, director de la compañía teatral Bocamandja. Autor de *Luz en la noche*, ed. verbum 2010 y *Crónicas de Lágrimas anuladas* edit. verbum 2014. sus trabajos han aparecido en antologías y revistas: *Afro-Hispanic Review* (USA, Hosftra, 2009) *La palabra y la memoria*, Guinea Ecuatorial 25 años después. (Madrid, verbum, 2010) *Caminos y Veredas: Narrativas de Guinea Ecuatorial* (México, UNAM, 2011) *Revista Iberoamericana* (2014)) *Guinguinbali*. *Revista Molossus*. Uno de los grandes logros de este escritor es haber sido finalista entre los 39 escritores jóvenes menores de 40 años en Nigeria, Port Harcourt, 2014.

Ingrid Bringas (Monterrey N.L., Mexico, 1985) has published in diverse national and international poetry journals. Parts of her work have been translated into English, French and Portuguese. She is the author of *La Edad de los Salvajes* (Editorial Montea, 2015), *Jardín Botánico* (Abismos Casa Editorial, 2016) and *Nostalgia de la luz* (UANL, 2016).

Felicitas Casillo: Poeta y narradora italoargentina, nacida en 1986, en la ciudad de costera de Bahía Blanca. Se desempeña como investigadora y profesora en Buenos Aires, capital de la República Argentina. Ha publicado los libros de poesía *Puré de abejas* (Editorial Vinciguerra, 2010) y *El gran enero* (Del Dock, 2017).

Don Cellini is a teacher, poet and translator. He has translated the works of several Mexican poets and is the translation editor for *The OfiPress Magazine*. He is professor emeritus at Adrian College, Michigan, USA and his most recent work is *Stone Poems* (2016) from FootHills Publishing. Find out more about his writing projects at www.doncellini.com

Luis Antonio Chávez Nació en San Salvador, El Salvador. Estudió en la Escuela Rafael Campo Ciudad de Los niños, (Santa Ana internado); Bachillerato en el Liceo Stanford (San Salvador); Contaduría y Periodismo en la Universidad de El Salvador, (UES). PUBLICACIONES: Amortajando los colores (Costa Rica, 1991); Un grito a dos voces, en coautoría con la poetisa Eva Ortiz (1993); Poesía para un canto nuevo (edit. sombrero Azul, 1993); Después de la tormenta llega la calma (Edit. Canizález, 1996); Poética universitaria (Edit. universitaria, 2001); Oda a la soledad (edit. Lis 2002); Los hijos del trueno, en coautoría con el poeta Alex Canizález (Edit. Molino de viento 2003); Primavera entre versos (Concultura 2005); Primavera de los poetas (ediciones de Alianza Francesa 2005 y 2006); Poemas a la paz (Concultura 2006), Poetas por El Salvador (editado por la literata francesa María Poumier en 2008, Edit. universidad Matías Delgado); Literatura homenaje (editado por el escritor Jorge Vargas Méndez (Edic. Venado del Bosque 2008). ¡Viva la poesía!, 2010); editado por el poeta venezolano Fredy Pacheco (Edit. uso, 2010). La editorial X/0 a través del poeta Vladimir Amaya publica la antología Torre de Babel, donde escogen parte de su material poético (2016); Para endulzar tu nombre (Editorial Escorpión, 2011); A golpe de fuego (Editorial Escorpión, 2013). Cartas urgentes para Ámbar (Edit. Escorpión 2017). En la actualidad ejerce el periodismo.

Nica Cornell is a South African writer pursuing her Masters in African Studies. She has published in *The Times*, *The Good Cemetery Guide*, *The Good Men Project*, *Aerial 2012*, *The Frantz Fanon Blog*, *Mobius: Journal of Social Change*, *Kalahari Review* and *Botsotso 2018*.

She has upcoming chapters in the *South African Foreign Policy Review* and *Africa, UK, and Ireland: Writing Politics and Knowledge Production*. She is a contributing editor for the Africa Matters Initiative.

Ricardo Elías nació en Santiago de Chile en 1983. Es autor de *Cielo fosco* (2014) y *A la cárcel* (2017). Sus textos fueron publicados en revistas literarias de Chile, Argentina y EEUU. Recibió la beca de creación literaria del Fondo del Libro en Chile y fue ganador del V Concurso Internacional de Novela Contacto Latino en EEUU con *A la Cárcel*.

Arturo Desimone: I am an Anglophone Latin American writer and I do the Latin American thing in English broken by a Latin American spirit, time, frame of mind and analysis.

ADRIANA DÍAZ-ENCISO NACIÓ EN MÉXICO Y VIVE EN LONDRES. Poeta, narradora y traductora, ha publicado novelas, libros de relatos y poesía, además de traducciones. Su novela *Ciudad doliente de Dios*, inspirada en los Poemas Proféticos de William Blake, será publicada en 2019. Ha colaborado para más de 30 periódicos y revistas en México y el extranjero. Fue letrista del grupo de rock Santa Sabina. Ha escrito libretos para teatro, ópera y televisión. Es miembro del Consejo Directivo de la revista *Modern Poetry in Translation*.

Beaton Galafa is a Malawian writer of poetry, fiction and nonfiction. His works have appeared in *Betrayal*, *The Seasons*, *Empowerment*, *The Elements*, *Love Like Salt Anthology*, *300K Anthology*, *Better Than Starbucks*, *Castello di Duino XIV*, *The Wagon Magazine*, *BNAP 2017 Anthology*, *Africa, UK, and Ireland: Writing Politics and Knowledge Production*, *Fourth and Sycamore*, *Mistake House Magazine*, *Every Writer's Resource*, *Birds Piled Loosely*, *Atlas and Alice*, *South 85 Journal*, *The Voices Project*, *First Writer Magazine*, *The Maynard*, *Literary Shanghai*, *Spittoon Collective*, *The Bombay Review*, *Bhashabandhan Literary Review*, *Kalahari Review*, *Nthanda Review* and *elsewhere*.

Rodolfo Sánchez Garrafa (Apurímac-Perú 1945). Antropólogo, magíster en antropología por la PUCP, doctor en Ciencias Sociales por la UNMSM. Becario del Gobierno Español en el INCIE de

Madrid. Representó al Perú en la Conferencia Mundial "Educación para Todos" de Jomtien-Tailandia. «Amauta del Perú Eterno», Asociación Capulí, Vallejo y su Tierra. Reconocimiento al trabajo intelectual «José María Arguedas 2015», Gobierno Regional de Apurímac. Ha sido docente en la Unidad de Post Grado de la Fac.CC.SS. de la UNMSM. Miembro del Comité Editorial de «Revista Andina» del CBC, miembro fundador del Círculo Andino de Cultura. Ha publicado libros en antropología y poesía.

Cristiane Grando, Cerquilho/São Paulo/Brasil, 1974. Poeta y traductora de textos literarios (español/ francés/portugués). Autora de *Fluxus: 25 años de poesía* – edición portugués/español en dos volúmenes publicada por Anome Livros y presentada en la 16ª FLIP–Festa Literária Internacional de Paraty. Autora de poesía en portugués, francés, español, traducida al catalán, inglés, italiano, zapoteco y guaraní. Laureada UNESCO-Aschberg de Literatura 2002-Francia. Doctora en Literatura (USP/ITEM-CNRS/Université Paris IV-Sorbonne), con postdoctorado en Traducción (UNICAMP) sobre la escritora brasileña Hilda Hilst. Cristiane tiene amplia experiencia en lectura de poesía en Brasil, Francia, Chile, Argentina, República Dominicana, Haití, Puerto Rico, EUA, Portugal, España, Uruguay, Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay.

CHARY GUMETA. Chiapas, México 1962. Es promotora Cultural y poeta. Ha publicado varios libros de poesía, siendo el último la antología COMO PLUMAS DE PAJAROS (CONECULTA CHIAPAS, 2016) que contiene seis de sus libros. Ha sido incluida en publicaciones en muchos países. Con la antología VOCES DE AMERICA LATINA (Edit. MediaIsla, E.U.), sus textos son parte de la cátedra de Literatura en la Universidad Hunter College of New York. Ha participado en festivales nacionales e internacionales. Participa en ferias de libros y coloquios como ponente. Actualmente es coordinadora del Festival Internacional de Poesía Contemporánea San Cristobal y de la Disciplina de Literatura en el Festival Internacional Multidisciplinario Proyecto Posh.

Jorge Contreras Herrera: Escritor mexicano (1978). Poeta, ensayista, editor, promotor de lectura y gestor cultural. Es director de Los Ablucionistas A.C. Salud y Felicidad a través del Arte y la Cultura, y director del Festival Internacional de Poesía Ignacio Rodríguez Galván y Del Festival Internacional de Poesía José María Heredia. Compilador de la antología Tributo a Sabines: he aquí que estamos todos reunidos; es autor de los libros de poemas Inventario de caricias, ¿Quién soy otro sino tú?, Poemas del candor, Otro que fui y El espejo adecuado. Ha colaborado con revistas como Círculo de Poesía (México), La Raíz Invertida (Colombia), Electrón Libre (Marruecos), Taqafat (Jordania) y en La Revista de la Universidad de México. Poemas suyos han sido traducidos al árabe, al italiano, al portugués y al inglés. Ha sido jurado en el Premio Estatal de Poesía de Tabasco José Carlos Becerra, el Premio Nacional de Poesía Joven Josué Mirlo y el Premio Nacional de Literatura convocado por el Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (Isste) en 2016. En la XXIX edición de la Feria Universitaria del Libro, de la Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo (UAEH), fue galardonado con el Reconocimiento Universitario al Fomento de la Lectura Profesor Rafael Cravioto Muñoz.

Tólá Ijálúsi is a Nigerian Creative Writer, Poet, and Reviewer. His works appears on various online journals and magazine such as *Kalahari Review*, *Dissident Voice*, *Indian Periodical*, *New Ink Review*, *BlackBoy Magazine* and *elsewhere*. His poems have been published in anthologies such as *Peace Is Possible*, *Muse For World Peace II*, *The Sun Will Rise Again*, *Best New African Poets 2016 Anthology* and *Best New African Poets 2017 Anthology*. He is a recipient of PIN Excellence Award 2016. He is the Managing Editor of *PAROUSLA Magazine*, *An Online Christian Arts and Literary Magazine*. He tweets @Ijalusi234 and blogs at mrijalusi.wordpress.com.

Rossy Evelin Lima (August 18, 1986 Veracruz Mexico), holds a PhD in linguistics and is an international award-winning poet. Her work has been published in numerous journals, magazines and

anthologies in Spain, Italy, UK, Canada, United States, Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, Colombia and Argentina. She has been awarded the *Gabriela Mistral Award* by the National Hispanic Honor Society, the *Premio Internazionale di Poesia Altino in Italy*, the *International Latino Book Award*, the *Premio Orgullo Fronterizo Mexicano* award by the Institute for Mexicans Abroad, the *Premio Internazionale La Finestra Eterea* in Italy, among others. She is the president and founder of the Latin American Foundation for the Arts, the founder of the International Latin American Poetry Festival (FeIPoL), as well as the founder of Jade Publishing. In 2015 she was invited to speak at TEDxMcallen about her experience as an immigrant writer in the U.S.

Jack Little (Londres, El Reino Unido, 1987) Docente, poeta, traductor y editor inglés-mexicano. Maestro en educación de Alliant University y ha colaborado en diversas revistas y antologías literarias inglesas, mexicanas e internacionales. Ha participado en diversos eventos literarios como la Feria del libro en el Zócalo y fue escritor en residencia en la casa Heinrich Böll en Irlanda. Es autor del poemario *Elsewhere* y actualmente dirige la revista literaria *The Ofi Press*.

Pippa Little was born in Dar-es-Salaam and lived there and in Newala, Tanzania until moving to Scotland. She now lives in Northumberland, North East England. She has published two full collections, *Overwintering* (Carcenet 2012) and *Twist* (Arc 2017) and has had work appear in print, film and radio all over the world. She is a Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Newcastle University.

Luis Felipe Lomelí (Etzatlán, 1975). Ecólogo y escritor. Recibió el Premio Bellas Artes de Literatura por su primer libro de cuentos *Todos santos de California* y el Premio Latinoamericano de Cuento “Edmundo Valadés” por un texto incluido en su segundo libro, *Ella sigue de viaje*. Parte de su obra ha sido traducida a una decena de idiomas y, hace unos años, fue seleccionado por el Hay Festival como uno de los mejores escritores mexicanos menores de cuarenta años. Es miembro del Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte de México desde 2012.

Edith Knight M is a Kenyan short story writer who chiefly writes on historical fiction. Some of her short stories have appeared in *Six Hens Magazine*, *Pure Slush Magazine* and *Writers Space Africa Magazine*. Besides writing she also enjoys reading romantic novels, taking long walks and laughing.

Nsah Mala, from Cameroon, is the author of four poetry collections: *Chaining Freedom* (2012), *Bites of Insanity* (2015), *If You Must Fall Bush* (2016), and *Constimocracy: Malaffricanising Democracy* (2017). In 2016, his story 'Christmas Disappointment' won a prize from the Cameroonian Ministry of Arts and Culture. In 2017, his poem, 'Servants de l'état' won the Malraux Prize in France. He attended the 2018 Caine Prize Workshop in Rwanda and his story 'Departure' is forthcoming in *Redemption Song*, the Caine Prize Anthology 2018. Other prominent anthologies featuring his writing include: *Hell's Paradise* 2016, *Best 'New' African Poets 2017 Anthology*, *Wales-Cameroon Anthology* 2018, and *Muse for World Peace Anthology, 3rd edition* 2018. Writing in Mbesa, English and French, he has been widely published in Cameroon, Nigeria, France, USA, Canada and India. His poetry first collection in French is forthcoming.

Sibusiso Ernest Masilela is a male poet born and bred in Emalahleni at the north east parts of South Africa, he aspires contributing in literature with strong lyricism, devices, images and symbols. His latest works appeared in *New Contrast*, *New Coin*, *Stanzas*, *Best New African Poets anthologies*, *Africanization and Americanization Anthology, Vol 1*, *Africa vs North America*, *Typecast*, *Sol Plaatje anthology vol 7* and other anthologies...

Marianella Sáenz Mora, Costa Rica, 29 Noviembre 1968. Graduada de la carrera de Turismo de la Universidad Metropolitana Castro Carazo y ULACIT. Tiene dos poemarios publicados: *Migración a la esperanza* (2015) y *Perspectiva de la Ausencia* (2017). Segundo lugar del Certamen Literario BRUNCA de la Universidad Nacional. Miembro de la Asociación Costarricense de Escritoras ACE y Tesorera de su actual Junta Directiva. Ha participado de

Festivales Internacionales de Poesía en Nicaragua, Colombia, México, Chile, Cuba y Ecuador. Ha leído en la Sala Vargas Llosa de Perú. Comprometida en proyectos de mejora social para el beneficio de niños, adolescentes y pacientes hospitalizados.

Alex Nderitu is a Kenyan poet, novelist and playwright. He was the first African to publish a digital novel (*When the Whirlwind Passes*). Other works include a poetry collection (*The Moon is Made of Green Cheese*), a short story collection (*Kiss Commander Promise*), a YA novel (*Africa on My Mind*) and four stage plays. Some of his writings have been translated into Swedish, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic and Kiswahili. His more academic work has appeared in various journals and is available at Academia.edu. In 2017, *Business Daily* newspaper listed him amongst Kenya's 'Top 40 Under 40 Men'. Official website: www.AlexanderNderitu.com

Kariuki wa Nyamu, a Kenyan poet, scriptwriter, critic, editor, translator, educator, film director and producer, earned a Bachelor's in English, Literature and Education from Makerere University, Uganda. His poems won The National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU) Literary Awards in 2007 and in 2010, while in third-year, he won Makerere University *Creative Writing in the Contemporary World Competition* for the best collection of poems. He is published widely both in print and online, in anthologies such as *A Thousand Voices Rising*, *Boda Boda Anthem and Other Poems*, *Best New African Poets 2015, 2016, 2017 Anthologies*, *Experimental Writing: Volume 1*, *Africa Vs Latin America Anthology*, *Africanization versus Americanization: Volume 1*, *Africa Vs North America Anthology*, *Writing on Language, Culture and Development: Volume 1*, *Africa Vs Asia Anthology*, *The Mamba Journal for African Haiku: Issue IV*, besides co-authoring a Children's poetry and short story anthology titled *When Children Dare to Dream*. He emerged the overall winner of Babishai Niwe 2017 Haiku Prize. He is presently pursuing a Master's in Literature at Kenyatta University, Kenya.

Andrew Nyongesa is a novelist, short story writer, poet, literary scholar and teacher with great passion for literature. His novels are

The Rise of Rodedom (2013) and *The Endless Battle* (2016), *The Blissabyss* (2017) and *The Water Cycle* (2018); all of which spin around the struggle of the underdog to subvert the values of the dominant group. His writing revolves around desire to dethrone dominant beliefs that incarcerate the otherwise free person. He has a voracious appetite for postcolonial literatures hence the focus of his scholarly works. He holds Masters of Arts (Literature) from Kenyatta University and is pursuing PhD in the same field.

Chaco de la Pitoreta (Héctor Efrén Flores A.) Olanchó, Honduras. Febrero de 1976. Abogado, poeta y gestor cultural. Publicó *Versos para leer desde las Trincheras* (2012), *Fe y Alegría: Entre Las y Los Tolupanes* (2013), *De la Opción a la Acción* (2012), *uniVerso* (2014), *1976* (2016). Fue publicado en la revista digital *ombbligo con poemas Sin tiempo ni Distancia* (2015). Antologado en *Todos los Caminos* (2014), *Al final del Asfalto* (2015), *Palestina Poemas* (2015), *Voces de América Latina II* (2016) *Letras sin Fronteras II* (2016), *Letras sin Fronteras III* (2017) *Voces de América Latina Fictio III (narrativa)* 2016, *Africa vs América Latina - volumen I* (2017) *antología poética Voces del Vino* (2017) *10 años Cien Mil Palabras* (2017). Coautor de la investigación *Maras y Pandillas en Centro América* (2005), *Derecho Penal y Sistema Penitenciario en Honduras* (2003) *Honduras: Educación pública de calidad y como derecho* (2016) *Reescrituras de la Educación pública desde Centroamérica* (2016) *Educación en Contextos de violencia* (2018).

Soleida Ríos, Santiago de Cuba, 1950. Empeñada desde hace más de 30 años en la creación de un nutrido Archivo de Sueños, ha dado a la publicación los dos primeros tomos (*El libro de los sueños*, 1999 y *Antes del mediodía. Memoria del sueño*, 2011). Entre sus libros (transgenéricos) destacan además: *El libro roto* (Editorial Unión, 1995 y La Palma, Madrid, 2002), *El texto sucio* (Ed. Unión, 1999), *Libro cero* (*Letras cubanas*, 1998), *Fuga*, una antología personal, (Unión, 2004), *Secadero* (Unión, 2009), *Escritos al revés* (*Letras Cubanas*, 2009 y 2011. Premio de la Crítica Literaria), *Aquí pongamos un silencio* (Ediciones San Librario, Bogotá, 2010), *Estrías* (Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2013 y

2015. Premio Nacional de Poesía Nicolás Guillén, Premio de la Crítica Literaria). Publicó además *Poesía infiel. Jóvenes poetas cubanas* (Editora. Abril, 1989) y *El retrato ovalado*, libro experimental con otras 34 autoras (Editorial Thesaurus, Brasil, 2012, Ediciones Unión, La Habana, 2015 y Winngs Press, Texas, EEUU, 2018). Bajo el auspicio del Instituto Cubano del Libro, creó y conduce los espacios interactivos Café Dulce (para niños) y Café Bar Emiliana.

Aarón Hernán Flores Suárez (Ciudad de México (CDMX), 1993) Poeta y lingüista, ha participado en numerosos congresos y festivales nacionales e internacionales y publicado en revistas de muy diversa índole. Como poeta, sobresalen su poemario, *Caudal en mano* (Editorial El Escriba, Argentina, 2015) y las múltiples antologías que recopilan su obra –entre ellas, destaca la *Antología de Poesía Mundial: Poetas Siglo XXI* (España). Como corresponsal, sobresale la serie *Panamartes* (*Chulavista Art House*, México / *The Art Boulevard*, España, 2013), escrita desde Panamá. Actualmente se desempeña como Ayudante de Investigador Nacional Emérito en el Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas (IIA) de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), en la CDMX.

Juan Riochí Siafá. Escritor, investigador y Graduado Social. Nació en Malabo (República de Guinea Ecuatorial). Natural de Rebola y Basilé Bubi. Realizó sus estudios de bachillerato en el seminario menor de Banapá y en el Instituto E´waisö Ipöla (Bioko). Se traslada a España para servir en el ejército (Academia Militar de Zaragoza), donde se especializó en Artillería de Campaña. Desde los 15 años, y tras la lectura de *Palabras de libertad* del escritor sudafricano Peter Abrahams, un libro ambientado en la Sudáfrica del Apartheid, y las obras de autores como Justo Bolekia Boleká, Donato Ndongo Bidyodo, Césaire Aimé, Ngügui Wa T'iong'o y Frantz Fanon, comienza a escribir relatos cortos y poesía. Su escritura se centra en tres géneros literarios: ensayo, poesía y novela. En marzo del 2016 publica su primera obra de ensayo titulado, *Redes migratorias e inserción laboral de los guineoecuatorianos*. En enero del 2017 su primer libro de

poesía *Tragedias y Laberintos*. En diciembre del 2017 un libro de narrativa Bêtápánó (Recuerdos), todas en Sial/Casa de África.

Kiuder Yero Torres (Santiago de Cuba, 1977). Entre otros ha obtenido los premios: Beca de Creación “Sigilfredo Álvarez”, 2005; Premio “Célida Cortina” Concurso Ala Décima, 2007; Concurso Literario León de León, 2010; Premio Literario Internacional “Ángel Ganivet”, 2010; Premio de Poesía “Fidelia”, 2012. Tiene publicado los libros: *Toda la Sombra*, 2008; *Prófugo del Silencio*, 2010 y *La Casa de Madera*, 2014. Compilado en varias antologías, entre ellas: *El Sol Eterno*, 2009; *La Isla en Versos*, 2011; *Memorias de una Isla*, 2015 y en publicaciones periódicas. Es organizador y fundador de los Encuentros de Poetas en Cuba “La Isla en Versos”.

Clara Lecuona Varela. (Santa Clara, Cuba 1971) Poeta, Narradora y Crítica literaria. Ha publicado los poemarios: *De la remota esperanza* (Ediciones Mecenaz, 2000), *Poesía cósmica y lírica de Clara Lecuona* (Ediciones del Frente de Afirmación Hispanista, México, 2002), *PreTextos* (Ediciones Mecenaz, 2003), *Fragmentaciones* (Sed de Belleza Editores, 2007), *Estancias* (Ediciones Mecenaz, 2007), *Lattes capuchino* (Editorial Oriente, 2011), *Poesía cósmica y lírica de Clara Lecuona* (Ediciones del Frente de Afirmación Hispanista, México, 2017) *Segunda edición*, *Del cotidiano Vacío*. (Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2018). Sus textos han sido incluidos, entre otras antologías, en *Antología de la poesía cósmica cubana* (Ediciones del Frente de Afirmación Hispanista, México, 2001), *Los parques. Jóvenes poetas cubanos* (Ediciones Mecenaz y Reina del Mar Editores, 2002), *Antología de la poesía de nueve poetas hispanoamericanas* (Ediciones del Frente de Afirmación Hispanista, México, 2002), *Queredlas cual las hacéis: 21 jóvenes poetisas cubanas del siglo XXI* (Casa Editora Abril, 2007), *La isla en versos* (Ediciones La Luz, 2010), *Esta cárcel de aire puro. Panorama de la ddécima cubana* (Casa Editora Abril, 2010), *Catedral sumergida. Poesía cubana contemporánea escrita por mujeres* (Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2013). Ha recibido varios premios literarios en Cuba. Se ha desempeñado como jurado en Eventos literarios Provinciales y nacionales en Cuba. Y como jurado en Eventos Internacionales de poesía y relatos en

Argentina. Miembro de la Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba. UNEAC

Ricardo Vides Zamora, mejor conocido por su seudónimo de escritor como **Gabriel Moraes**, nació en la ciudad de San Salvador, Capital de El Salvador, el 26 de junio de 1957. Estudio y se graduó de Letras en la Universidad Nacional de El Salvador el año de 1993. Escribe poesía y cuento, aunque se inclina más por el relato. Ha ganado premios literarios únicamente a nivel nacional, entre ellos: Certamen Wang de escritores jóvenes en 1991, 5°. Certamen Nacional de Literatura de la Iglesia Luterana, y algunas menciones honoríficas.

Introduction/Introducción

Writing Grandmothers, Africa Vs Latin America Vol 2 is a continuation of cross-continental anthologies series, especially between African writers and Latin American writers. It takes on from where we left off with *Experimental Writing, Africa Vs Latin America, Vol 1*. This anthology has 6 nonfiction pieces, 10 fiction pieces, and 67 poems and translations of poems in two dominant languages in the two continents, English and Spanish. We have work of poets and writers from Honduras, Mexico, USA, UK, Cuba, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Puerto Rico, Spain, Nigeria, South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Equatorial Guinea, and Ghana all collaborating around our theme of using the folktale or oral African story telling traditions in finding solutions to problems bedeviling the two continents, which we felt were as a result of colonialism and or post colonialism.

The present collection arises with the intention of trying to rescue the deep roots that unite the African continent with Latin America. This space provides the opportunity to give a voice to writers from both latitudes that address issues related to life, religion, politics, and history. Voices that address the inevitable theme of the colonies, the identity of the various regions, their culture. It also describes the iniquities that both continents suffer such as poverty, corruption, violence, etcetera.

We believe that both latitudes are united by the same inheritance, we share the same grandmothers and this anthology is a way of portraying those identities. In this collection you can find poems, stories, analysis of theater in Africa, the black history of Tango, Gabriel García Márquez as the union between both regions. We believe that the reader will find a range of different topics to immerse in and recognize the similarities and

differences between both latitudes. As the author Chaco de la Pitoreta says: "*Africa runs through my veins, Africa is the original song, America is Africa, the point where history can be rewritten*".

Escribiendo sobre nuestras raíces: África contra América Latina, Volumen 2 es una continuación de una serie de antologías entre escritores africanos y escritores latinoamericanos. Dicha colección parte desde donde la dejamos con *Experimental Writing, Africa Vs Latin America, Vol 1*. La presente publicación cuenta con 6 piezas de no ficción, 10 piezas de ficción y 67 poemas (y traducciones de poemas) escritos en los idiomas dominantes de ambos continentes: inglés y español. Recibimos trabajos de poetas y escritores de Honduras, México, Estados Unidos, Reino Unido, Cuba, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Perú, Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Puerto Rico, España, Nigeria, Sudáfrica, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenia, Guinea Ecuatorial, y Ghana. Todos ellos colaborando en torno a nuestro eje temático; utilizar el cuento popular o las historias orales africanas para encontrar soluciones a los problemas que aquejan a los dos continentes, que consideramos fueron resultado del colonialismo y el poscolonialismo.

La presente colección también surge con la intención de intentar rescatar las profundas raíces que unen el continente africano con América Latina. Este espacio brinda la oportunidad de dar voz a escritores de ambas latitudes que abordan temas relacionados con la vida, la religión, la política y la historia. Voces que abordan el tema inevitable de las colonias, la identidad de las diversas regiones, su cultura. También describe las iniquidades que sufren ambos continentes, como la pobreza, la corrupción, la violencia, etc.

Creemos que ambas latitudes están unidas por la misma herencia, compartimos las mismas abuelas y esta antología es una forma de retratar esas identidades. En esta colección puedes

encontrar poemas, historias, análisis de teatro en África, la historia negra del Tango, Gabriel García Márquez como la unión entre ambas regiones. Creemos que el lector encontrará una variedad de temas diferentes para sumergirse y reconocer las similitudes y diferencias entre ambas latitudes. Como dice el autor Chaco de la Pitoreta: *"África corre por mis venas, África es la canción original, América es África, el punto donde la historia puede reescribirse"*.

Non Fiction

Arsonists and Map-Makers

Arturo Desimone

The colonized individual or group aspires to have a “voice” that resounds, booming in the discussion halls of the media, politics and academia of more advanced societies. This wanting (perhaps suicidal) state of the subaltern has become an almost comical cliché.

But long before the hermetic and bureaucratic university-world capitalized on the invisibility-complex of the formerly colonized “subaltern” as a source of innumerable theories, conferences, routines and careers, there existed the heroic self-consciousness in the pages of Bolivar’s Letter from Jamaica. That self-consciousness of the Latin American railing against the obsolete status and invisibility assigned by the imperial center, also appeared in the manifestos by José Martí, and in polemics by resisting poets and writers ever since.

Many have denounced how the imperial centre assumes its place, putting “us” at the margins, “us” polarized into “the South” artificially, on the papyrus maps of European cartographers, who hoisted themselves above the equator, above all tropics.

Centuries before such manifestos were written by Latin Americans in the languages imported by Europe, at the dawn of the Ibero-American encounter, map-makers littered the Americas with fantasy-monstrosities, as if envisioning prototypes for what was to come. Spanish 16th century cartographer Diego Guitierrez collaborated with Dutch engraver Hieronymous Cock, drawing creatures of medieval bestiaries onto the paper: America loomed with cyclops, giantesses, centaurs and headless men; all cannibals who Columbus’ fearing crew expected to see, while scouting for alternative ‘free trade’ routes to bypass the Arab world’s hostile mercantile power. The “Middle East,” originated as a trade barrier, an obstacle affecting import/export routes between Europe and fertile

Asia: an interferer, turbaned doorman between Europe and Asia. Colombus then, like the later Hudson, travelled as imperial envoys, scouts seeking the famed "Passage to India". Today that "Passage to India" manifests rather un-poetically in the Panama Canal and the correlated US colonization of Panama.

Michel de Montaigne was an early (16th century) critic of colonial ideology. Montaigne's essay "On the Cannibals," deconstructed the colonial propaganda about the alleged barbarism of Brazilian natives. He sided with them, against the Catholic conquerors; not requiring a team of anthropologists or linguists he could compare them to other peoples in the history of Europe and Asia and assumed the basic humanity and reason behind their actions. Montaigne, unfortunately, was exceptional among academic intellectuals, who usually produce legitimization for official policies. How "we" were mapped became the subject of Cuban revolutionary, and politician-scholar Roberto Fernandez Retamar's *Todo Caliban* "All that is Caliban" working in parallel to Edward Said's writing.

On a less cerebral, more exuberant level, the defensive response to the imperial map-makers also radiates from the prose of the eternally young Uruguayan, Eduardo Galeano, author of "The Open Veins of Latin America" an exploration of the vast continent and its history of turmoil in the conflicts with Spanish, British and US imperialism.

Ironically, perhaps the greatest commentary on such mapmaking came not from leftists, but from the hand of a politically conservative and Europhile Argentinean writer, Jorge Luis Borges, who had a fascination for bestiaries and absurd maps. Borges was the patron writer of the culture of a part of Argentina where the Argentinean, isolated in remotest South, with the Andes mountains to the West, the Antarctic to the South, and immense plains stripped of their expropriated nomadic former inhabitants and requiring days of travel until the border regions of Paraguay and Brazil, the outside world becomes a surreal guessing game, and the Argentinean might

fantasize an Argentina that has waterfalls cascading into an infinite cosmic trap at all its orders. The map of the world in the mind of the average Argentinean is Borgesian and would have been even without Borges having appeared on the literary map. Perhaps comically, wanted to be buried in Switzerland.

The burning word “Cannibal” comes from a hiccup, perhaps after eating, but in the attempt to pronounce the name of the Caribali, the tribe which according to the early explorations was a warrior-culture, navigating the archipelago in fast moving canoes carved from Caoba and other hardwoods, living from raids and plunder of other tribes that practiced agriculture among the Taíno. They were said to have religious rites involving the eating of the excised heart of an enemy. Of late these theories have come into contestation, often revised as potentially having been a species of early propaganda devised by the Spanish, in order to cover for the conquistadors’ own blood-lust and atrocities against the natives: the Carib of myth may have also been an alter-ego for the Catholic, iron-shod conquistador living out the Catholic inferno in the Antilles of what they saw as a contaminated, heathen Eden. The truth more likely stands at the intersections of waters and shadows, known to the whisper-laden Sargasso of the Caribbean. In his romance *The Tempest*, Shakespeare renamed his Caliban in word-play after Cannibal. The loveable wretch Caliban is claimed by some Caribbean authors as a hero (among them, Roberto Fernandez Retamar, and myself, a Caribbean author of Jewish descent, identifying as both Caliban and Merchant of Venice though not equally adept at financial accounting schemes.)

Today Northern, political “maps” and optics for looking at us seem devoid of their past, Baroque artistic quality, yet the South clearly still bears of the mark of “Caliban” in them: a virile, corrupting continent, full of steamy dictatorships, well-defined gender roles, financial monstrosities—in short, Latin America means a repository of all deemed Politically Incorrect. And today’s imperial West is still imperial, while cultivating an obsession with political

correctness in such a way that it would seem “political correctness” is the new style of self-denominated “Enlightened Imperialism” bringing its civilizing missions (in both Africa and Latin America, these manifest partially in the forms of NGOs, which eagerly implement foreign political blueprints for the continents and a rhetoric of philanthropy called “the left.”)

In the North’s virtual map, resistance to progress and to the ruling values is blatant from the Mexico side of the border-wall down to the Southern spine-tip of Argentina. Just as the coverage of the Middle East and terrorists do not resemble the flamboyant and romantic beings of 19th century European Orientalist paintings, today’s Western view of Latin America, as a continent of mafias, machismo, failed and stagnant revolutions, of superficiality and moral licentiousness, careless sexual reproduction, promiscuity and fiscal irresponsibility. Yet the new maps lack the beauty-aesthetic that is so often feared and condemned by the academic institutions of the West that breed its ruling elites. The new maps, revised and made politically correct, lack only the art, the pizzazz and the aestheticism of past depictions, but they keep the imperialism intact.

Among the important creole, Latin American ‘maps’ and views of our destiny, were such visions as described by the Cuban liberal, poet and liberation fighter José Martí in his manifesto ‘Nuestra América’ in the 19th century; and the earlier Simón Bolívar’s writings.

Recently, in the island Curaçao, sitting by fortresses where buccaneers had imprisoned their captives, while elections took place one day after King’s Day is celebrated on the self-governing, former Dutch colony where Bolívar once walked, I retraced some of the walks he took in his youth and during his time of refuge on the island, then sat down and read his famous revolutionary document “La Carta de Jamaica” “The Letter from Jamaica.”

In 1818, after Bolívar had already led Venezuelans to independence as captain and supreme chief of the Republic, but after

having lost the battle for the second Republic against the Spaniards, he turned to the Congress of Venezuela to say “I gave up everything for the health of the nation; willingly I accepted exile, believing my banishment would prove healthy for New Granada (*archaic name for Colombia*) and likewise for Venezuela. Fate and providence had already sentenced these disgraced regions to ruin, having sent us (the Spanish general) Morillo with his exterminating army. I sought asylum on a foreign island, and went to Jamaica alone, without resources and without expectations. Having lost Venezuela and New Granada, still I dared to think of how to expel their tyrants” These may seem like statements of despair, perhaps bringing to mind the state of Venezuelans today strewn on islands like Aruba, Trinidad and Curaçao, without hope and in fear of the suspicion of local authorities. And yet this words prefaced a hopeful speech, wherein Bolivar would give the insights he acquired during his exile on the island Jamaica, insights as to the deep fractures within the Spanish imperial power, and the advantages and strengths in the Latin American resisting nations. The one called “Liberator” with an almost-messianic fervour by the Venezuelans, encapsulated his insights in the ‘Letter from Jamaica’ and elsewhere, composing an anti-imperial map of the enemy and of the resisting anatomy (and, perhaps, almost like composing a symphony.)

Bolivar described a darkness over Latin America, and an ignorance among both creoles and Europeans about the New World, because of its immensity which could neither be resolved by explorations of German explorers like Von Humboldt nor unravelled by the pseudoscience of statistics. That darkness was also fear, due to the “barbarities” of the atrocious crimes committed by the Spanish colonists, “barbarities that our present age has discredited as fabulous, because they seem to outdo the limits of human perversity” in their cruelty. Such alienation is produced by terror campaigns of foreign powers in the continents housing rebellious populations and natural resources; the crimes and schemes so baffling in cruelty they become

difficult to believe and dismissed as propaganda or as conspiracy theory. It seems the strategies of power-holders have not changed; only the willingness and the vision of revolutionary generations have perhaps greatly varied across recent history. Bolivar writes "Larger is the hatred that the Peninsula (meaning Spain and Portugal, the Iberian Peninsula) than the ocean that separates us from them" He predicts that the Mexicans, "having embraced the republic, will battle to avenge their ancestors or follow them into the sepulchre", that the islands Cuba and Puerto Rico will also tire of Spain's dominion. Meanwhile, he laments that "not only the Europeans, but also our sisters to the North have agreed to be immobile spectators" Verily, until the very last moments of the victorious struggles by Latin American countries for independence from Spain, the United States refused to choose sides, refused to sell contraband weapons and denied any other form of solidarity to the Latin American patriots. The Founding Fathers of the United States already then preferred realism and realpolitik, preferred the sarcastic to the literal interpretation of "Freedom of Mankind" and "Brotherhood".

Today, a parody of leftism is the chief intellectual export from the USA's private universities, flooding the marketplace of ideas in the world's colonies where they enter by way of academic harbours. Above all, Bolivar's diagnosis of the continent points out that the colonized condition is one of utter passivity, where not even local despots and native tyrannies are active; to be colonized is an entirely passive condition, without an active role for the state or government except in so far as it receives dictates.

For Bolivar, there was no collective innocence in the colonized of the Americas: "we who are a mixture of the legitimate owners of these lands and the Spanish usurpers, have Europe's laws, but are born in America" For him, that mixture between "expropriated native" and history's invaders brought the (Latin) American civilization its strength and wisdom; and he confronted the Spaniards for their denial of being children of such cross-pollination of races

and cultures: without any doubt "all Spaniards have some African blood in their veins" he insists. Bolivar regards Spain's imperial desire to declare itself homogenous and monolithic as the true source of its cultural decadence and the void of ideas, which, along with the void of values caused by colonialism's barbarity, shall lead to the downfall of Spain's empire. His prophecy was accurate, fulfilled by revolutionary efforts materializing what the letters and poetry of resistance invoked. The creole mixture triumphed above the Spanish claim of monolithic homogeneity; and that quest among Spanish imperialists culminated at its very worse when, in the 20th century, the dictator Francisco Franco, nostalgic for Spain's lost grandeur, began to assassinate and decimate much of the Spanish population as being "not truly Spanish." Today, the traumas of those campaigns lead once more to the disintegration of Spain's constitutional unity and identity, while former colonial subjects in Latin America struggle to regain the foothold and the quest for independence, together.

Bolivar saw gold-hunting and slave-holding as the absolute enemies of liberalism, unlike French and North American liberals who sooner or later pretended these were compatible with a belief in universal freedom and emancipation. After Toussaint's rebellions defeating the corrupted Napoleonic navy on the island of Haiti, Bolivar continues a decidedly un-cynical, entirely non-postmodern interpretation of Liberalism: without contractual clauses, without fine print, Liberalism and the Freedom of Mankind means all of Mankind and not only those who own other men, women and children.

Simón Bolivar in that way begins a tradition in which the Latin Americans uphold the struggles of an Enlightenment that had become farcical and corpse-like in other regions of the Occidental, mercantilism-driven world. The discourses on freedom in Latin America are not riddled with parenthetical and quotation marks and manipulative subtexts of the sort that characterize "postmodernity" and the discourses on the "postmodern", in which all interpretations of texts reduce these to absurdist exercises and tool benefitting the

self-promotion of the reader, the professional interpreter or academic. A world of oppression, this world of lies we have always inhabited, needs a critique of imperial culture that finds its base in Neo-romanticism of the Latin American sort; rather than in the prevalent “post-modern” factories of parenthetical marks, parodies, political correctness and scare-quotes.

América con “A” de África

Chaco de la Pitoreta

Mi ADN esta en esas tablas – me dijo – y sus ojos se clavaron y la cruzaron por las rendijas, entre los nudos y los moretones de los años. La vieja canoa descansa de las olas en una orilla del mar, del inmenso mar y acumula algas muertas, y memorias y futuros.

Bajamos de ella esa noche sin saber a donde llegábamos. Descendimos vestidos de falda y listos para la guerra. Así lo mandó Joseph Satuyé en San Vicente. África espera del otro lado insistió, la tierra para el regreso, el reencuentro, esta allá y ustedes tienen el cometido de preparar la llegada. Tienen que buscar aliados y reconstruir la memoria de los que no hemos vuelto aún. África no es el territorio sino su alma y corazón. África son ustedes donde quiera que vayan, con quien sea que estén y mientras hagan lo que mandan nuestras tradiciones.

Desde entonces somos lo que ve. Eternos. Eternos enamorados de la libertad, de las olas del mar, de los peces, del viento de los cicales y su aceite sagrado, de esta tierra que besa el mar, y se abrazan, donde crece la yuca y el plátano con esos eternos asomos nuestros de libertad.

Dejé que se perdiera entre las olas de su mar y retomara el aire que se le fue de los pulmones. Me clavé en la canoa, en las huellas de sus costados, en las grietas del tiempo y los ecos del viento encajonados entre tablas... esperé.

II - En mis venas

África corre por mis venas, va conmigo desde el origen y sigue acá, no quise decirlo mientras hablamos junto a la canoa para no herir su historia, para no amenazar su memoria. En una prueba reciente, de esas que la tecnología moderna permite, lo confirmé con un

irrevocable 25 por ciento galopando mis venas. Me rastree hasta Mali, ahí mis conexiones son más fuertes. Entonces emergió mi deseo de libertad, mi grito de esclavo, mi amor por la humanidad.

África es la canción originaria, la tonada que le dio inicio a todo. No es el color de piel, la fuerza en los brazos, la costa, o la rosa de los vientos. África es la humanidad entera. El punto de partida. África es un río en mis venas y América un volcán que la violencia perfora y escupe magma roja, con olor a sangre, salpicando impunidad reviviendo los sempiternos apartheid.

América es África el punto donde la historia se puede reescribir, donde la humanidad vuelve a ser una y los caminos rutas para los encuentros y no para la muerte. Eso lo supe cuando vi mi árbol y me descubrí diverso, de aquí y de allá, en la combinación que rompe la frontera y nos abre al mundo más allá de las reducciones a las que nos condenan. Cuando vi mi sombra y me descubrí igual que Satuyé, cuando volví sobre la canoa y me bambolee con ella, como en el mar, como en el éxodo, aquellos días en la historia.

III – la tarea pendiente

Volvió los ojos a los míos y una mueca de dolor histórico golpeó mi rostro. “Somos el eslabón de una cadena humana reventada en mil pedazos” – me dijo – “que todavía sangra, duele en la memoria y en este espantoso presente”. América se hizo de eslabones rotos por eso va siempre rota. Muchos han intentado rehacerla pero los desmiembran, los silencian, los matan. Sin embargo aún no nos rendimos, no mientras quede un americano que reconozco su ancestralidad y se abra a la posibilidad de unificar la causa, para reencontrar los abrazos. Reacomodo su mirada.

Entre las olas se dibujan siluetas y en la convexas de las del retorno se desarman. Como África y América. Cuando llegamos lo hicimos siendo africanos pero para el regreso no lo somos, perdimos la forma. No como asunto de color, ni de fuerza, ni de identidad, sino

desde de pertenencia, de casa común, de tierra ancestral, como esas olas que vuelven al mar, pero distintas de cómo vinieron.

Afuera esta la tierra prometida, la que nos dieron nuestros ancestros, la revelación de los Dioses. Pero no la tienen secuestrada. Por eso debemos volver sobre la historia y - como Satuyé - reorganizar al pueblo. En alta mar están los espíritus de los guerreros, los que se fueron antes, los que no llegaron. Esperan una señal y saltan a la costa, a recuperar la humanidad. Esa es mi tarea, por eso sigo acá, pese a los años y el cansancio.

Al otro lado de la bahía...

Nos quedamos en silencio por un tiempo más. El sonido de las olas y los ecos de la montaña se dejaban escuchar mientras el viento los unía en un enorme abrazo. La vida es de agua y tierra... y viceversa. De vez en cuando unos zancudos torturando mi piel provocan mis gestos y rompen la calma. Me miró. Una sonrisa leve se insinuó entre los carriles del tiempo que le surcan la cara y de sus ojos una lección incuestionable: África es América y América somos todos...

Casi besando el mar unos Pelicanos rompen el viento, viajan. Quizá es Satuyé, pensé, con sus guerreros, dispuestos a la lucha. Y me clave en su vuelo. De pronto uno de ellos se despega del grupo irrumpe al cielo, se eleva cuanto puede y se desploma sin gravedad. Volví la mirada, lo busqué, imploré una explicación.

Reafirmó sus manos en las tablas y se impulsó. De pie volvió sobre mi, suspiro. “África no es allá, señalo el vasto mar, ni es ahí y dirigió una mueca tierra adentro. África esta en nuestro pecho, y palpita. En nuestros pies sin fronteras, en nuestras manos construyendo humanidad, en la soberanía global, reafirmando la casa común. Y camino. De pasos lentos y seguros se fue alejando. La huella de su pies descalzo dibujó la arena, me marcó la ruta. África, América, el planeta esta en tu pecho, vivo en tus latidos y no solo entre nosotros los negros... aún veo la silueta de Secundino por la

bahía y pienso que es el Pelicano, elevándose alto para después caer sin gravedad.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is the Cultural Link between Africa and Latin America

Alexander Opicho

Given the apparent magical surrealism that the months of April and May are the months of fate and death of writers, artists, dramatis, philosophers and poets, a phenomenon which readily gets support from the cases of untimely and early April deaths of; Max Weber, Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare, Francis Imbuga, Semebene Ousmane Masizi Kunene and Chinua Achebe then Wisdom of the moment behooves me to adjure away the fateful month by allowing me to remember Gabriel Jose de la Concordia García Márquez by expressing my feelings of grieve through the following poem;

*You lived alone in the solitude
Of pure hundred years in Colombia
Roaming in Amacondo with a Spanish tongue
Carrying the bones of your grandmother in a sisal sag
On your poverty written Colombian back,
Gadabouting to make love in times of cholera,
On none other than your bitter-sweet memories
Of your melancholic whore the daughter of Castro,
Your cowardice made you to fear your momentous life
In this glorious and poetic time of April 2014,
Only to succumb to untimely black death
That similarly dimunitized your cultural ancestor;
Miguel de Cervantes, a quixotic Spaniard,
You were to write to the colonel for your life,
Before eating the cockerel you had ear-marked
For Olympic cockfight, the hope of the oppressed,
Come back from death, you dear Marquez
To tell me more stories fanaticism to surrealism,*

*From Tarzanic Africa the fabulous land
An avatar of evil gods that are impish propre
Only Vitian Naipaul and Salman Rushdie are not enough,
For both of them are so naïve to tell the African stories,
I will miss you a lot the rest of my life, my dear Garbo,
But I will ever carry your living soul, my dear Garcia,
Soul of your literature and poetry in a Maasai kioondo
On my broad African shoulders during my journey of art,
When coming to America to look for your culture
That gave you versatile tongue and quill of a pen,
Both I will take as your memento and crystallize them
Into my future thespic umbrella of orature and literature.*

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, an eminent Latin American and most widely acclaimed authors, died untimely at his home in Mexico City on Thursday, 17th April 2014. The 1982 literature Nobel laureate, whose reputation drew comparisons to Mark Twain of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finny* and Charles Dickens of *Hard Times*, was 87 of age. Already a luminous legend in his well used lifetime, Latin American writer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez was perceived as not only one of the most consequential writers of the 20th and 21st centuries, but also the sterling performing Spanish-language author since the world's experience of Miguel de Cervantes, the Spanish Jail bird and Author of *Don Quixote* who lived in the 17th century. Like very many other writers from the politically and economically poor parts of the world, in the likes of J M Coetzee, Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer, Doris May Lessing, Octavio Paz, Pablo Neruda, V S Naipaul, and Rabindranath Tagore, Marquez won the literature Nobel prize in addition to the previous countless awards for his magically fabulous novels, gripping short stories, farcical screenplays, incisive journalistic contributions and spellbinding essays. But due to postmodern global thespic civilization the Nobel Prize is recognized as most important of his prizes in the sense that, he received in 1982, as the first

Colombian author to achieve such literary eminence. The eminence of his work in literature communicated in Spanish are towered by none other than the Bible, especially in its Homeric style which Moses used when writing the book of Genesis and the fictitious drama of Job. Just like Ngugi, Achebe, Soyinka, and Ousmane Marquez is not the first born. He is the youngest of siblings. He was born on March 6, 1927 in the Colombian village of Aracataca, on the Caribbean coast. His literary bravado was displayed in his book, *Love in the Times of Cholera*. In which he narrated how his parents met and got married. Marguez did not grow up with his father and mother, but instead he grew up with his grandparents. He often felt lonely as a child. Environment of aunts and grandmother did not fill the psychological void of the missing father and mother. This social phenomenon of inadequate parenthood is also seen to be catapulting Richard Wright, Charles Dickens, and Barack Obama to literary excellency. Obama recounted the same experience in his *Dreams from my father*.

Poverty determines convenience or hardship of marriage. This is mirrored by Garcia Marquez in his marriage to Mercedes Barcha. An early childhood play-mate and neighbour in 1958. In appreciation of his marriage, Marquez later wrote in his memoirs that it is women who maintain the world, whereas we men tend to plunge it into disarray with all our historic brutality. This was a connotation of his grandmother in particular who played an important role during the times of childhood. The grandmother introduced him to the beauty of orature by telling him fabulous stories about ghosts and dead relatives haunting the cellar and attic, a social experience which exactly produced Chinua Achebe, Okot P'Bitek, Mazizi Kunene, Margaret Ogola and very many other writers of the third world. Little Gabo as his affectionate pseudonym for literature goes, was a voracious bookwormer, who like his ideological master Karl Marx read *King Lear* of Shakespeare at the age of sixteen. He fondly devoured the works of Spanish authors, obviously Miguel de

Cervantes, as well as other American-European heavyweights like; Edward Hemingway, Faulkner and Frantz Kafka.

Good writers usually drop out of school and at most writers who win the Nobel Prize. This formative virtue of writers is evinced in Alice Munro, Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer, John Steinbeck, William Shakespeare, Sembene Ousmane, Octavio Paz as well as Gabriel Garcia Marquez. After dropping out of law school, Garcia Marquez decided instead to embark on a call of his passion as a journalist. The career he perfectly did by regularly criticizing Colombian as well as ideological failures of the then foreign politics. In a nutshell he was a literary crusader against poverty. This is of course the obvious hall marker of leftist political orientation. Garcia Marquez's sensational breakthrough occurred in 1967 with the break-away publication of his oeuvre; *One Hundred Years of Solitude* which the *New York Times* Book Review meritoriously elevated as the first piece of literature since the Book of Genesis that should be required reading for the entire human race. This is the same appreciative position taken by Salman Rushdie in relation to the book. Marquez often shared out that this novel carried him above emotional tantrums on its publication. He was keen on this as his manner of speech was always devoid of la di da. So humble and suave that his genius can only be appreciated not from the booming media outlets came out about his death, but by reading all of his works and especially his Literature Noble price acceptance speech delivered in 1982.

Africa and Kenya in particular have a lot of passionate followers of the Nobel Prize winning writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Most notable are Ben Okri from Nigeria and Godwin Siundu from Kenya. Siundu has overtly declared Marquez to be his child-hood literary mentor, whereas Okri accepted that his famous book the *Famished Road* was benchmarked on Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Siundu and Okri are the only two that have been captured by the main media, especially in Kenya, to have displayed open and

passionate intellectual followership to Garcia Marquez. However, there are very many others intellectual loyalists to Marquez, this is evident in the substantial anthologization that Marquez have enjoyed in Kenya, especially his two stories; *Handsome Man in The World who ever Drowned*, anthologized by Chris Wanjala in the *Memories we Lost*, and then another short story known as the *Ghost* anthologized in the *When the Sun Goes Down* by Waveney Olembo, and also not forgetting the Gabriel Garcia Marquez section at the Kenya National library at Kakamega branch where the author of this article had an opportunity to read Marquez's *Love in times of Cholera*. Other dedicated followers of Marquez are in the likes of Collins Mumbo of Moi University and very many others in Kenya literary society forming the most unwavering flocks of silent discipleship to Marquez.

In contrast to the above, the fact is that passionate following of a writer alone without reading his or her works exhaustively is just but a game of much ado about nothing. A favorite writer has to be read critically so that he or she can write effectively. Unfortunately, the key barrier to good reading of your favourite is lack of money to buy the works of the writer. For example, an average Kenyan reader cannot afford to buy the works of Marquez, most of his works are retailing at the prize of above one thousand Kenya shillings. This is an economic barrier enough even to stifle honest readership. Fortunate enough, now the University of Texas is reported by the *Deutsch Welle Online*, to have published 27000 pages of Marguez's writings to be accessed free of charge by any person interested in reading Marquez. On doing this the University of Texas recognized the fact that Garcia Marquez is among the greatest Colombian man or South American that ever lived. Thus, this is a buck stopping at the table of the readers, read the magic realism you have been longing for in the authorship of Garcia Marquez.

ENACTING TRADITIONAL BASED DRAMA ON MODERN STAGE THROUGH TECHNICAL CREATIVITY

Abdulmalik Adakole Amali

Abstract

African performances are done with a lot of virtuosity in total theatre idiom; music, dance and drama. They sum up the core essence of the African performance culture that keep our culture, heritage, beliefs and practices alive for better understanding of the past, present and helping a better future. This paper examines method of animating traditional based drama on modern stage through technical creativity. Through analytical research methodology, this study brings out the importance of animating traditional based drama on stage through technical creativity and how it helps ergonomically the overall picturization and the total outlook in a theatre production, using light, costume, makeup, sound, props and special effects. Findings in this study reveal that creative exploration of technical aids has significant bearing in the eventual output of drama performances. The paper concludes that combination of traditional and modern paraphernalia of technical theatre makes theatrical performance more believable and culturally acceptable to the audience. Therefore, the paper recommends that there should be an aggressive exploration into traditional performances with a view to exhumate the technical elements that will create a true marriage between the traditional and modern African performances.

Introduction

To perform is innate nature of man. Whatever we do; be it sleep, eat, play, cry, anything at all, can be translated to be a kind of performance depending on the context we want to look at or perception based on the background of the culture, Omoera (2013) further agrees that whether visual or performing arts remains the creative exploration and expression of indigenous communicative ideas, forms, language and materials in a unique expression. This forms our aesthetics sense of judgment and perception in relation to our performance; how we want to translate this per formative ideas to be understood and related to by those within and around us, as Ododo(1998) adds with a supportive citation from Nwoko that the:

perception about Form, Shape and Colour especially are culturally bound. Form and Shape of an object for instance could determine its perception as being beautiful or ugly. The culturality of this perception stems from the belief system of a people. While European artist for instance is preoccupied with creating forms and shapes that will amount to physical beauty whose aesthetic value has been described as art for art sake or art for pleasure, the African artist does not create a form that is just ugly or beautiful. The form of an image is imbued with some other power of expression so that it could speak.

The complex nature of Africans tends to give African culture such dignity that induces profound excitement. African domestic life, in anthropological summaries, seems to be full of special observances, and ceremonies to make the advancement of individuals from birth, through weaning and puberty, to maturity and old age. Omotosho (2013) concludes.

This reasoning above sparks the idea of how these two ideas can bring about a pleasant harmony cultural and traditional but modern to give a trans- relation to the perception of how we see, understand and accept a traditional but modern performances and what is associated with it. It is in line to therefore say that a traditional based drama evaluation like culture varies depending on the intended

message to be translated. Traditional performance in the modern theatre is the transfer of the value and what those values means and the technical creative medium used to translate it to get the exact message and meaning to the people of various ethnic and cultural background, using the modern theatrical approach in the enactment process with the supportive technical elements of costume, makeup, light, sound and special effect in a good replica of the original to give it its functionality and attribute.

Traditional Performance and transfer to the stage

Tradition is the way people have been able to live and sustain their culture, believes and collective experience that has influenced them to defined who they are. When all this mentioned are combined with music, dance, drama, folk tale, any or form of enactment of their behavioral attitude and patterns that exist in its original form, it becomes the people's traditional performances.

Tradition and traditional performance usually have norms in which they follow. There are rules and laws that it has to abide by to achieve the set objective for the performance; keeping originally as its set aim. Every performance that is traditional based must be in similitude to the original as a deviation could result in the message or the aim for its performance been lost. We can conclude, that traditional performance is the exhibition of feeling in terms of cultural values which can be accompanied in most cases with movement, rhythm, costumes ether to worship, celebration or to meet societal needs in accordance to the existing socio- psychology of the people.

Transfer to stage

In traditional performance, space is determined by the type of performance performed in it. The performance in a traditional Africa performance space are fluid and allow for movement from one point of a community to another...the space utilized for

performances like this are not restricted to a specified environment or local; as such its space is determined by the procession and anything it embodies in the pathway, Uwadinma-Idemudia (2012).

This is the result of the total theatre performance typical of African that is embodied with coordinated dancing in accordance to the rhythmic drums accompanied by costume, makeup, sound, props and other befitting paraphernalia accustomed to the performance. We have to look at how the traditional technical element can be transferred to the stage and still give the desired meaning or objective for which the performance is set to achieve. Since some needed items may be difficult or cannot be implemented on a stage performance, technical special effect is there by apply, to achieve the same results.

In transferring the traditional performance to the modern stage, one must be aware of the basic tenant of the rule the European theatre has and its effect on the transfer to the stage. It is the awareness and influence, that a proper scencronization can take place for an effective achievement of a true African stage performance. Igweonu (2006) agrees with this opinion when he said; that there is a growing awareness about authenticity and uniqueness of traditional African theatrical model that do not necessarily have to fit into the Euro-American theatrical model. Robert (2010) supports that; works of art are representational, that is, they use the medium of an art form to represent aspects of the actual world, or of fictional worlds, or of both at once. Yet this is clearly done in quite different ways in different art forms.

These merger of the two as one, forms main concept of performance on the modern stage as Ekere (2012) strengthens that it is, done with careful calculation with consideration for the ..., word view and the culture of the people, taking in to cognizance the fact that... objects do not only beautify but communicate essential messages to the audience because... in African theatre have always been intimately and functionally linked to the socio-political and religious belief of the African society in concept and it goes beyond

aesthetic reflection of reality as is often associated with western theatres. As we remind ourselves that modern theatre has no nihilistic value for culture only for the representative value in a theatre production which ends immediately the performance is over.

Technical creativity an overview

Technical creativity and its application aid how we view, perceive, and understand the basic element put in to a performance to bring out pleasantly meaningful value. When we watch a performance, whether we like what we have seen or not, a great energy and time has been put in to it to bring to the level that is been presented before us. The audition, rehearsals and final performance all take a lot of the know how in the best ability of the people in charge to bring the final result. The amount of light needed, the colours to be used depending of the genre of the performance, the types of costumes based on the time, setting and local, making the scenography, props, sound application, gestures and movement of performers on stage.

Theatre like culture has its own rules in performance. Every aspect is guided by set of rules and instruction of how it should be used in a performance. It is the effective application of the technical creative to meet the demand of the performance and be pleasing to see that makes technical theatre the medium in which the theatre is seen and heard. The light, sound, costume, makeup, colour, props and special effects most follow its theatrical rules.

Technically, colours and light are the medium through which emotion; mode and genre can be determined. There creative uses add to a meaning of a performance. Ododo (1998) adds that red, orange, yellow and brown hues are “warm” while the blues, greens and grays are “cold”. The red, orange and yellow hues are seen to elicit excitement, cheerfulness, stimulation and aggression; the blues and greens, security, calm and peace; and the browns, grays and blacks, sadness, depression and melancholy.

In theatre of light and in various colours is important to any production, colour and the intensity are the major determinant in a performance. The use of light and in different colours and intensity determine the time, mood, local and the genre. It is accepted in theatre practice that, in lighting, colour red is used for scenes where there is danger, death or unpleasant happenings in the performance. Green coloured light represents fertility, birth, growth, agriculture and hope for a new beginning.

Blue stand for love, happy beginning or happy re-union, while White stands for peace, tranquility, success and progress and Black signifies evil, mourning, fear and sadness.

In theatre, costuming a performance, the genre determine to a very large extent in how the costume is made , this is because according to theatre tradition costuming a tragedy, apart from red and black, ox blood, navy blue, brawn and other related dull colours are majorly used. In a satire, bright colours such as yellow, orange, light green etc. are used, while comedy has bright colours exaggerated in its brilliant form. There is no room for any dull moment in terms of use of colours in a comedy performance.

In traditional performance, colours do not have general meaning, they are used according to its meaning and this varies from culture to culture. Red, black, white, green, yellow, blue etc all means deferent things to deferent people according to the dictate of their cultural significant. The costumes are made to serve the specific purpose with strict rule in the type of material, colour, texture, even the type of thread use to sew it in some cases. Those to wear certain costume are also designated. Any alter of these rules traditionally an atonement most be made as custom demands. Therefore, in the modern theatre when performing a traditional play, this element has to be understood before the final synchronization of the theatre and the tradition to have proper theatrical viewing.

Use of technical creativity

African art in context tells a story, records history and makes projective statements about the affairs of men and corporate existence of a society. The nature of forms and shapes created are thoughtfully organized to communicate. Ododo (1999) this been in mind of the production team , are put in to use with freedom, autonomy, and imagination, all concepts entailing one another, conspiring to forming an art. A framework that presents the audience with a perspective on what is there to be seen as a result of which the audience knows how to look and how to understand what it sees, Bleeker 2008 (10) concurs.

To have a good understanding of how technical creativity is used in the modern theatre to bring out a good traditional production we have chosen *Madam Tinubu* by Akinwumi Ishola, *Eda* by Duro Ladipo and *Langbodo* by to Wale Ogunyemi elucidate the points.

EDA



Fig. 1 Party scene in Eda's house (photograph by the researcher)

From the picture of the scene, we see the use of bright colours typical of the genre of the production which is satire. Though a play in Yoruba with a typical Yoruba sitting basic rules were still put in to place as the shift from tradition to the stage.



Fig. 2 Songo entrance effect (photograph by the researcher)

The play is opened by the entrance of various deities to meet with obatala. This scene shows songo the god of fire being ushered in by fire with the use of special effect to create the fire before he comes in. This helps to give reality and believability traditionally attached to the deity.



Fig. 3 Obatala 's entrance (photgroph by the researcher)

Obatala the supprime one enters with a specail effect of very bright freaky light difficult for the eyes to gaze at . This is in accordance to the believe that he is above all and as such can not be seen; his mightyness is further aided with bright, white shining colour costume covering from head to toe as an enfacy on his holiness.



Fig. 4 Iku before Obatala, waiting to be sent on an erant (photograph by the researcher)

Iku is costumed in a black overall which is the symbol of death and evil with skeleton symbol on his back and front. His face painted in white looking like a skull with a big black baton in his hand. The followspot with a red gel is used to follow him for the enfarcize of how dagerouse he is.



Fig. 5 Esu (photograph by the researcher)

Esu is costumed looking half like a human and the other half with a tail with one side of the body white and the other red with an inconsistent mannerism in line with the dual nature of the traditional believe of Esu being capable of being good and bad at any given circumstance.

MADAM TINUBU



Fig. 6 A scene from *Madam Tinubu* (photograph by the researcher)

We see here that the cyclorama is painted in bright colour of the genre of the play. The colourful Eyo performance typical of an African performance is very much visible in the production to bring out the harmonization of the traditional in to the modern theatre.

LANGBODO



Fig. 7 A scene from *Langbodo* (photograph by the researcher)

The technical element in this scene is put together to transform the stage in to a mountain with tree around it to suit the line with the warrior in the scene. We see the creativity of the technical crew in bringing to reality the play write imagination.

From the above technical exhibition displayed in the various traditional based performances we can conclusively agree with Adegbite, 2004(2) that, technical theatre usually ensures the smooth transition/transmission of peoples' cultural tendencies. This is possible from one culture to another when their totality is revealed via performances. In the process, this movement may possibly come in contact with more advanced (improved) cultural tendencies, which could be easily imbibed or adopted. This has since been experienced in the Nigerian theatre via early contact with the European theatre conventions – with their attendant effects in all the arts of the theatre.

Conclusion

We have seen in the study that with the technical creativity in performance goes a long way in maintaining the African culture;

helping to tell the African stories through the cross breathing of technical ideas and concepts to bring to the modern stage the African ideology, still upholding the sanctity of the people and their existent behavioral pattern.

Traditional performance helps to throw more light on our ways of living and cancelling any form of misconception that may have existed about us culturally as well as helping to know our cultural similarities thereby strengthening us as one global village.

Traditional base drama helps researches to be made about the performance which increases the creativity of the technical crew as they most go all out to achieve the needed goal.

A traditional drama turns out very colourful and pleasant to watch because of the colourful nature and flamboyancy typical of African culture in relation to performance.

Plays with strong rooted cultural setting should be recommended and encouraged for performance by the younger generation to help them believe in their culture and keep them in tone with traditional ways of been technically creative.

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La gramática de los Lugones

Felicitas Casillo

La muestra del Museo Carlos Gardel, en el barrio porteño de Abasto, se llamaba “La historia negra del tango”, y allí se exponía una amplia variedad de documentos que daban cuenta del contexto social en el que surgió este género musical. El curador era Norberto Pablo Cirio, quien rescataba la relación que tuvo la población negra con el ritmo arrabalero. A través de una selección de instrumentos, artículos, fotografías, partituras y demás objetos significativos, el visitante podía apreciar la síntesis que existió entre la cultura de inmigrantes europeos y la afroamericana, especialmente, hacia finales del siglo XIX y principios del XX.

Yo escribía en ese entonces en la revista *Quilombo*, auspiciada por la embajada brasileña, que trataba sobre la cultura afroamericana en la Argentina. Esa mañana me había llamado nuevamente los Lugones. Los Lugones era en realidad Max, uno de los casos que yo estudiaba en la Universidad. Su extraño cuadro consistía en traducir los textos a lenguajes inexistentes, que sin embargo mantenían la gramática de las lenguas que él conocía: francés, inglés y suajili. Se hacía llamar los Lugones porque decía que no era suficiente solamente ser un poeta.

Varios historiadores consideran que durante la colonia, los negros representaban un 30 % de la población. La mayoría trabajaba para las grandes casas de la aristocracia del Río de la Plata y vivía en los barrios sureños de Monserrat, San Telmo y San Cristóbal. Con el tiempo, este grupo étnico se dispersó e instaló en diferentes puntos de la ciudad de Buenos Aires y de la provincia. Sin embargo, en el año que se realizó la muestra, la última vez que se había censado a la población africana en la Argentina había sido en 1887. De acuerdo con el último Censo Nacional de la República Argentina, en 2010, la población afrodescendiente ascendía a 149.493 personas, 0,4% del total.

Max era, entonces, parte de ese mínimo porcentaje. Vivía en el barrio de Recoleta, sobre la calle Junín, y solía bromear sobre que ahora él era el señorito. Se pasaba los días entre fajos de documentos, ensayando diversas redacciones sobre esos grandes papeles de escritorio de las oficinas de antes. A veces mecanografiaba con lentitud y firmeza, y cuando se cansaba bajaba por un aperitivo a La Biela. Iba a Misa diaria de once en la Iglesia del Pilar. En más de una oportunidad lo encontramos recostado en el sillón de gobelinos rojos que había llevado hasta el balcón que daba sobre el cementerio. “Muertos... recuerdan el propio fin”, decía en español rasposo, con un cigarro grueso en la mano. Las traducciones, en cambio, las intentaba explicar en inglés.

Desde la época colonial, los negros habían hecho música. La mayoría de las veces, esos ritmos eran europeos y los aprendían durante las lecciones que se dictaban a los niños aristócratas. Max sabía que su familia había vivido por la zona de San Cristóbal y que sus antepasados sabían cantar. Las casonas del siglo XIX eran amplias pero abiertas. Los acordes que resonaba en los salones llegaban hasta los patios y las cocinas, donde los negros fregaban y cocinaban. Después, en los recreos o festejos, reproducían esas melodías, agregándoles el tambor y el tono del candombe. El soporte de la música era en ese entonces la vida misma.

El curador de la muestra del Museo, Cirio, decía que fue hacia 1870 cuando los afroporteños comenzaron a participar en los carnavales. Existían en ese momento dos tipos de comparsas: las que tenían influencias europeas y las de influencia africana. Ya en ese entonces, la cultura local proveniente de Europa, que terminaría de afianzarse a principios del siglo XX, comenzaba a marcar tendencias. La mayoría se volcaba a los carnavales de tipo veneciano, de coloridos arlequines, con máscaras, antifaces y calzas. Se considera que fueron estas comparsas el origen incierto del tango, un nacimiento paulatino y trabajoso, quizás porque aunó poblaciones de diferente procedencia y culturas casi antagónicas.

Una vez, viendo uno de las magníficas pinturas de arlequines músicos que pintó el artista argentino Emilio Pettoruti (1892-1971), los Lugones me señaló la cara sombreada de uno de los personajes. Yo le expliqué que sus antepasados habían existido antes que el pintor.

Él pensaba que podría traducir no solamente las lenguas sino diversas artes, sobre todo la música. Varias tardes nos habló del “interlenguaje” que había creado de forma artificial, una especie de normativa lingüística entre lenguas existentes y esas diversas expresiones que a él le interesaban. Concebía el interlenguaje como una especie de carnaval. Sabía que en los carnavales de sus antepasados, los ritmos se fusionaban; instrumentos africanos interpretaban música tradicional europea; voces con acentos extraños cantaban el español, despertándole sonidos de madera, agua y selva. Lo mismo había ocurrido con la mazurca, el vals y la polca, géneros estos de la música criolla, que al mezclarse generaron una mixtura novedosa.

El día que fui al museo Carlos Gardel, los Lugones me contó que había terminado de organizar la gramática. La llamaba “el compendio”, y me dijo que le tomaría varias horas explicármelo. A menudo, entrevistados con cuadros similares habían afirmado de pronto encontrar la clave, pero luego balbuceaban, y si se los dejaba que escribieran, repetían un mismo grupo de palabras. Nunca habíamos encontrado a alguno que lograra escribir un compendio. Me pidió que en el museo prestara atención a la “Guardia Vieja”.

Los estudiosos del tango fijan el inicio del memorable periodo conocido como “Guardia Vieja” hacia 1897, con la creación del tango “El entrerriano”, compuesto por Rosendo Mendizábal, un afroporteño. A partir de entonces, esta música urbana, llorosa pero fiestera al mismo tiempo, sonó sin descanso en “las casas de baile”, eufemismo decente con el que se denominaba a los piringundines o prostíbulos. Entre los más conocidos intérpretes y compositores locales de origen africano se destacaron Alejandro Vilela, “el negro

cototo” Almeida, Eusebio Aspiazu, “El mulato” Sinforoso, Dafne Zenon Rolón y Ruperto Leopoldo “el africano” Thompson, entre muchos otros. Dos nombres merecen especial mención: Guillermo Barbieri y José “el negro” Ricardo, quienes además de compositores, fueron guitarristas de Carlos Gardel. Barbieri murió con “el zorzal porteño” en el accidente aéreo de Medellín.

Los Lugones me pidió que le repitiera la lista de nombres. Entrecerraba los ojos con el vaso tallado frente a la boca, hasta que alzó la palma rosada y me detuvo. Eusebio Aspiazu, dijo, ese era uno de sus antepasados. Luego no quiso hablar más y tuvimos que irnos sin saber nada del compendio. Nunca, en realidad, nos volvió a hablar de su lenguaje artificial, y luego de unas semanas nos invitó a un espectáculo de tango donde reinterpretaba algunos de los cantantes más reconocidos del siglo XX, que habían tratado el asunto de las raíces africanas: Sebastián Piana, Cátulo Castillo, Francisco Canaro, Hugo del Carril, Osvaldo Sosa Cordero, León Benarós y Homero Manzi.

Benarós, sobre todo, le salía bien. Quizás Max había encontrado al final el modo de traducir perfectamente. Cuando finalmente regresó a Río de Janeiro, nos dejó sobre la mesa de roble del departamento de Junín los siguientes versos: “Son sus labios capullo en que rebosa / sangre de esclavos por nutricio jugo, / fatigándose en ellos la golosa / beatitud de un ídolo verdugo.” Guardé en el fichero de casos extraños ese fragmento. Abajo agregué, para acordarme de no darle importancia, las palabras “de un poeta”.

IT'S NOT ABOUT ME: Daries (2010-2011)

Tendai Rinos Mwanaka

Friday, September 16, 2011

Some stupid thief came to our place once more, with the intent to break in, but couldn't find a way in. he had to steal the head of our bathroom shower tape. It costs 4 dollars on the open market, and I am now 4 dollars set behind, but I will be fine. I think I have perfected the art of living with very little over the years, so it's no big deal. I wonder, if he was going to be caught, or beaten up, for only 4 dollars! It's pathetic to have such a kind of life; hopeless.

I am crashing out of the relationship with her. The biggest part of me is urging me to keep going, wherever. Yeah, there are difficult feelings I have to get a good hang over, but it's always a part of the deal

I am very much focused on my writing, even though the frustrations are sometimes so draining. I have been checking the diaries, and they are coming along. My intention is to have 100 plus diaries by about the beginning of Dec- 4 December, when I started this diary cycle a year ago, when I had just returned home from staying in South Africa...

I am getting rejections on books I sent for consideration. The residences that I have won don't offer grants, so I won't be taking them. I hope I will get one that offers some money. I need the money. The perpetual condition of an artist!

It's getting hot and hot, humid, debilitating.... It stills one's thinking by boiling the brains. The flies are a nuisance. They are so many flies, and they nibble on your skin as if they want to bore you, eat you alive. The other thing, which is a nuisance to me are the rats. They are so noisy these days, you almost think it's a room-full of them but I think there are just two of them. I think the female one is on heat, and the male is having it great... They are playing, its foreplay, the love-bits, the lovemaking, the happy noise..., it's so noisy. Are humans that happy, I don't think so? It's obvious this is the season of mating, of deepening those winter-long relationships, of coming alive again, but I seem to be set on another course. But another look at it, I have been looking around, knowing that the winter's love tale is no longer holding out. I am not going to waste a lot of my time mourning this relationship, no. I don't have the moans, whines, cries, tears anymore these days. I have this perpetual need, or maybe a want to keep moving and I don't know how to still it down. I have been used before; having to wait much longer than was necessary, hoping things will miraculously change for me, and getting in the end a raw deal. I feel the same about this Miss K relationship. I feel like I was used, already.

Sunday, September 18, 2011

I have always obsessed a lot about a river. It came up in a conversation with a local girl. I was going out, to the internet, and I asked her to accompany me, without telling her where I was going. She asked me where I was headed toward. I said she should just accompany me. She said she first wanted to know where to. I started talking of the surprise of discovery. That she should be like a river. I said the river flows, follows the flow of the terrain in flowing away to an unknown destination. It wouldn't know that it could meet up with obstacles, like mountains, which it will circle around and still proceed on its journey. That humans have tried to stop the river, to divert it, with untold consequences. That the waters in the river don't have anyone to ask whether they should be going where they will be going. They just go. Rivers have always obsessed me, in my dreams. I always dream of crossing a river, or attempting to. I always know when, in the dream, I fail to cross a river, then whatever I have been attempting to do or expecting; career, love, life- is never going to happen, *in that meanwhile*. When I cross the river of my dreams, then I would know I am succeeding. The recurring river dreams are actually part of me now. Even when I am awake, I dream of crossing some conscious rivers, crossing the Nile, the Thames, the Zambezi, the Amazon, and Hudson etc..., of my life. Sometimes I am physically in the cities that straddle, or hug these rivers. I dream of moving, crossing into other consciousness, not necessarily out-of-this-world consciousness, but those just beyond the horizons. Even when I have been there before, physically or unconsciously, especially when I haven't been there for some time, I dream of going there again. I go there emotionally, mentally or even spiritually, sometimes through memories. These frontiers of my dreams, i.e. the river dreams, are things that are very much there, alive, always in my consciousness.

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

Everyday I stand or sit in our backyard, which overlooks the street, Svosve street, or road. There is a car-wide walkway in the backyard, and the sides of which are with crops and vegetables, Covo vegetables. Front yard, there is nothing much to watch. Our front yard overlooks a secondary school's grounds, so that when I feel like seeing a bit of the outside of my rooms, to see more humans than the me(s) that resides in these rooms, I sit or stand on this back yard, and just watch people walking, passing through. This diary came about because I was just sited in this backyard and decided I was going to make a note of that. It's a thing I have been doing for nearly 2 decades now. I only didn't, couldn't do, that when I was away in South Africa for the two and half years. And for almost 10 months now, I have been doing that. It's a way to cool down for me, to enclose myself into some thinking. I watch people, all sorts of people. Young adults with their arrogant airs and fashion senses- the epitome of the American culture. Old man and woman, mostly weighed down with ageing and flagging bodies, and middle aged man and woman, not so young anymore- sometimes in their cars, beautiful cars. It's their *I-have-achieved-it* attitude; in fact I have achieved everything in life attitude, some bending towards ageing, weighed down by responsibilities. There are also little boys and girls, full of play and play... I think I know pretty much everyone who passes through this street regularly for the last 10 months, some from longer ago... I see changes in them, I know there are changes in me, too. It's like being watched by life that's passing through you. It watches you severally, noting things, recording, without any ambition. I don't know why else I do that. I don't know what I want to achieve with what, but that's what the watcher in me notices. It's the noise in this dusty street, the heat of mid-September, hot on the people passing through, on their frames, their bodies that I seem to be dancing around in my thoughts inferno. Whilst I will be observing all this, I will be having one of those mind-travelling marathons thinking. Images inside me, the answers and questions, those outside images in Svosve road,

sometimes greetings from someone who knows me, and glances from those who don't know me once in a while, all these flirt in, through, out of my mind. Sometimes I wonder what they think of me, those who have seen me in this backyard for years, for ages, 20 years is a generation of life- me still watching this street. Do they think I am crazy, a connoisseur, and a peep? Am I a peep? Sometimes I just don't see anything, no one, I will be deep inside me, and so I can't be a peep. Sometimes someone greets me and I don't hear them, sometimes they would think I am ignoring them and leave me alone. Sometimes I would hear them on their second greeting or the call of my name. I will be too much inside me but I will eventually hear them because they want to be heard. We all want to be heard.

I relax this way- sometimes, in this soothing complexity of my life, I get softened. I can stand or sit in the front yard for hours on end, up to 5 hours some days, especially when I am troubled, when I don't have anything to write about. Even though a part of me will be telling me that I am pretty lazing it up, I know it's something I can't just give up on, that easy.

"I will meet you by the witness tree..." it's a quote from Rod Stewart's song that I am listening to as I am writing this diary... I love Rod, for years and years, from over 20 years of listening to him.., it's a generation in me of listening to his especial gruffy soft rock voice and the simple yet deep beautiful lyrics. The songs pushes you back to a past in which you thought things must have been that easy, when love was easy...

Thursday, September 22, 2011

It is like a hospital of the hopeless: Life in Zimbabwe is like that. It's obvious when you have a closer look at the people. In my street, I was surprised to hear that they were over 3 guys who went bonkers, tried to kill themselves, some tried to kill others. There are several girls who are staying home, unmarried- some with their own children, after failing to get married. Lots of them are staying with men who haven't paid *lobola*, most of the men don't have the wherewithal. And the girls have resorted to prostitution, and a lot of men are thieves, vagabonds. Mothers now chose who they want their children to be married to. It is always about money. The girls have lots and lots of boyfriends, some to cater for their financial needs, some as prospective husbands. There are no jobs being created, save only in the civil service, so most of the brightest minds are ending up being teachers, nurses, police and army people. Going to the university seems a waste of time because you won't get employed after finishing your 4 year degree. There are several graduates I know in my street who are sitting on their university degrees, or have now started on another path, different from the one they had studied. There is simply no work. Those who have been in the workplace have been in the same position for over 5 years. My manager at Amtec Motors Harare, for 4 years I worked there before I resigned to become a full time writer, artist..., is still on that same position, for 8 years now. There are no better prospects for the lot so they are staying put. The good thing is the economy is stabilized due to the use of the United States dollar, such that it isn't that crazy, like 3 years ago, but it's very painful, all the same. It's a slow, painfully slow, drip, drip, dying or life. The prospects of this life, or the hope that some day it will change is all that drives people to keep going. But the truth is, it would take a lifetime to get things right again. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to change the course of things here and the first stop is the political situation, and it's a big, big ask. Those who left the country do not want to return, because, really, there is nothing to return home for.

Last night I watched a documentary about Somalia on BTV (Botswana Television). I felt we were lucky to have a functioning government, even though it's incompetent. Somalia is a hell hole. Over 800 000 people have left the country just this year, running away from the draught and famine. When you gaze at the people, you wonder; are these people from another planet, or are they cybogs or something. There are so bony and wasted. Some old man, I doubt he is that old, was recounting that he and his family had to walk for over 100kms to the refugee camp in Kenya. He was saying they had to leave some kids behind, just like they left some domestic animals behind, when they couldn't walk anymore- leaving them to die. Some were saying they haven't eaten anything for days on end; some died like flies due to starvation. There are millions still trapped inside Somalia, especially in the southern part which is under the *Al-shabaab* dogs. The galling thing is to realise that nobody- the major powers, has been really interested in solving the Somalia issue. It's been running on since 1991 when Saide Barre was gutted. You wonder why the whole world hasn't been concerned. Why they can't seem to care at all. The world over, I should think, it is Somalia's refugees that constitute the biggest numbers of outsiders. Staying in Somalia is like staying in another planet, a regressive planet, and to think that it's just a couple or so countries from where I am, is even inconceivable. Some Somali man in this interview was asked whether he knew where Botswana was. He said he knew there is a country by that name, but that he doesn't remember where it is. He frankly didn't know where it was. For him it could be anywhere in the Americas, or Asia, or even in Europe. The answer is why should he bother; Botswana or no Botswana, it doesn't change his condition. You can't even say his situation, because situations can be changed, it's a condition, and it's not even a condition of hopelessness. You need to

have hope for you to be hopeless. That word doesn't exist for him. To them, it's about life and death, or precisely about death. The line that divides their condition and death is pretty very, very thin. The two interlope most of the times.

The stoking thing is to know your country is not any better. A few months ago it was rated two places above Somalia as the most failed state on planet earth.

Friday, September 23, 2011

Last night I had my river back. Someone, in the afternoons had told me that there is a time in her life when she used to dream dreams, and the dreams will become fulfilled the way she had dreamt them. She had told a close relative about this and that close uncle told her that she was a spirit medium. Then they were a time when she couldn't dream anything at all, for a long time. She told her parents that she longer dreams anything, or when she would dream she wouldn't remember the dream when she wakes up. Her parents asked her whether she had confided in someone about her dreams and she told them she had told the uncle. They told her that the uncle was a dangerous person- was a witch, a bad medicine person, and that he had stolen her dreams so that she won't be able to predict them or remember them, and thus that's why she now feels she has stopped dreaming. He had done that so that she won't see him coming for her and the whole family. So they suggested she should go and just tell this uncle that someone had stolen her dreams, and that she has stopped dreaming. She did that, and the uncle could only commiserate with her, but that night she started dreaming again.

Last night I started dreaming again, my river dreams. Not that I had stopped doing any other dreams, but my river dreams. Rather I have been having those dreams in which I would be fighting or straggling against things or persons. These exhaust me yet the river dreams generate. For some time, I have assigned these fighting dreams to problems I am dealing with: the failing relationship. I have been through unbelievable pain and it's obvious that I should have dreams full of suffering and strife but I am still focussed on my decision about the relationship, and last night I got my breakthrough dreams.

The last time I talked of these river dreams was with the woman I have talked above about. It's her who had dreamt the dream for me, just before the start of our difficult relationship with Miss K. Back then, I had told her it meant I was going to lose out on one of the art opportunities that I had applied for, but now I realise it was about the relationship, when it started getting sour.

In her dream, she said, she and my sisters, Gladys and Judith, had crossed this heavily flooded river and that I had failed to do so. I was left alone, with no one, and no will to try to cross it. They were laughing at me, exasperated with why I wasn't crossing over to their side, but I looked like a simply lost spirit. I told her she should dream of this river again, some day, about me crossing it, and that it would mean I have gone through, past pain and I have come a crop.

I have waited for over a month to hear her say she had the dream, in fact I had just forgotten about it altogether, until after my dream last night and I realised I had made progress.

In the dream I was somewhere in the road, driving fast towards some destination, with a lot other--- mostly friends, *people*. We came to an intersection, and then I found myself in a car driving in another direction and someone else had taken over the driving. Later I took the driving, and later still, we were now walking, I was leading a bunch of mostly friends, different friends to the previous dream chunk. We came to an ugly river spewing water in fury. I negotiated

my way closer to it but couldn't fall in. Two guys were taken in by the waves and fell into the river. Later, I remarked to no one but myself that I had passed even closer to the river but that I hadn't been taken in, yet these guys had been taken when they were a bit on the safe than I was. The guys looked like next door guys, but I couldn't care less about it. We kept moving until we came to a good tarred road that was covered in a slow moving sweet river and we crossed it safely, ahead of which was a gate to an outside forest. I didn't know why I still thought I was still with someone. Then I woke up and I felt good. I could be breaking through, getting a good grip of my life. But now I am in the reality of the situation as I write this diary. It still pains me to think of her, knowing she is very close, and that I can't talk to her, that I don't want to talk to her.

Fiction

LA CHICA DEL BARRIO

Recaredo Silebo Boturnu

Tenía la cabeza rapada. Se vestía de pantalones vaqueros, de camisetas de todos los colores; en su guardarropa, ninguna falda, ningún vestido y en el barrio en seguida la señalaron con el dedo acusón en una sociedad acostumbrada a estigmatizar y a ver lo diferente como algo anormal. En cuanto a la educación social, era diferente de las chicas de su barrio acostumbradas al pepesoup, a las alitas con picante, a las cervezas y a la buena vida sin antes aprender a hacer algo. En aquel barrio había más de lo mismo: las mismas peleas facticias, las mismas discusiones ociosas, el mismo ambiente virulento.

Los niños y las niñas crecían viendo cómo Papá y Mamá lapidaban las horas sentados en los bares del barrio. ¿Qué tanto hacían los padres y algunas madres en aquel lugar, y que ingerían para que después salieran de allí embriagados? Te embargaban sentimientos cruzados al ver a algunos niños imitar a sus progenitores cuando salían de aquellos bares. Los niños acertaban, eran verdaderos artistas en revestir los personajes de sus padres *borrachos*.

En el barrio no había ni campo de fútbol ni parques, por lo que los niños, junto a las niñas, tenían que ingeniárselas jugando en la carretera principal. Los otros lugares eran entresijos llenos de lodo pringoso que cuando llovía y se quedaba empantanado en la suela de los zapatos, tenían que ir a descargarlo en aquella carretera donde después jugarían los niños. Todos los días jugaban en la carretera principal cuando el sol ya casi se escondía detrás de los árboles. Y para el cabreo de los niños, tenían que interrumpir sus partiditos para dejar pasar los coches que no cesaban de circular y no tenían otro lugar más que ese.

El barrio era un conjunto de barracones. Los barracones son construcciones hechas muchas veces de material permanente y otras de material no permanente, alineadas y con estructura rectangular,

compuestas de una o dos habitaciones, una cocina a veces, y otras veces se reconvertiría una de las esquinas del salón para el servicio nutritivo. Algunas eran una verdadera tristeza observarlas, porque tenían la estructura de grandes helicópteros hechos de madera o papel a punto de estallarse. Y luego te dabas cuenta que dentro de aquellas “*viviendas*” (porque hay que llamarlas de alguna manera), había personas haciendo de *papá y mamá* que traían a hijos, muchos hijos, al mundo. Niños preciosos y feos que eran la alegría de aquel barrio. También, había pequeños chalets de configuración colonial. Yo creo que era un barrio colonial y que cuando todos olieron la humarada del petróleo, todos salieron de sus pueblos para asentarse en aquella ciudad, creando cada familia mecanismos para construir aquellos helicópteros.

¿Ya os dije que muchos de los chavales se cabreaban por tener que interrumpir su partidillo? Pues claro. Se cabreaban y mucho.

Y sobre todo cuando eran coches de alta gama con dos tubos de escape que cuando pasaban, y a gran velocidad, por donde jugaban los niños, soltaban un ruido estremecedor. Y los niños y todos los que se encontraban en aquel lugar metían los dedos en los tímpanos para evitar que explotasen porque, ciertamente, sentían que se les iban a explotar. Y los Bugattis, Ferraris, Porsches y Chevrolets pasaban y daba la impresión que tenían la intensión manifiesta de fastidiar o provocar a los niños que jugaban en aquella carretera, porque no tenían otro espacio donde poder practicar ese deporte que tanto les gustaba.

Era impresionante ver desfilar tantos coches —mejor dicho, tantos cochazos— en aquel barrio sin iluminación en su calle principal y sin agua corriente en las casas. Los niños se enojaban, y también se quedaban estupefactos ante las estructuras de aquellos automóviles que solo habían visto en las películas de Hollywood.

Los niños ocupaban la carretera y sus madres las aceras. Os explico: algunas madres, que tenían toda la responsabilidad casera de dar de comer a tantas bocas que tenían en casa, colocaban mesas, sí,

mesas, en las aceras y sobre ellas colocaban para la venta diferentes productos: cebollas, aguacates, ajos, tomates, caldos, harina, perejil... Aquellas mesas hacían de mercadillos para los naturales de aquel lugar que tampoco tenían la posibilidad de ir a los grandes mercados ni supermercados para poder costearse los precios de los productos mínimos.

Lo de los barracones y los coches de última gama que transitaban en aquel barrio era un contraste impresionante. A ella, la chica del barrio, siempre le vino la pregunta de ¿por qué si las personas podían comprarse este tipo de coches no podían colaborar en la mejora de la vida de las comunidades abrazadas a una injusta pobreza?

En aquel lugar se notaba el cambio climático que habían anunciado muchos seres visionarios, aunque otros, “líderes”, no hacían caso de aquella amenaza que ya hacía estragos en aquella parte del mundo. Algunos días y algunas noches el calor era terrible y era, a veces, imposible conciliar el sueño. Sí, ella sabía que la deforestación que sufría su territorio era causante de la inestabilidad del tiempo. Era como si a muchos le habían tomado la medida de saquear toda la madera para beneficio de sus estómagos, y de sus familias, evidentemente.

Ella estaba ya cansada y no pudo más. Y no era porque precisamente había caído un calor aterrador, no.

Al comienzo de aquella semana, ella había tenido un fuerte dolor de cabeza que le había hecho ir al hospital regional para chequearse. ¿Cómo es que ella no se fue como los otros vecinos a la pequeña clínica del barrio que había montado un ciudadano chino? Como os dije antes, ella se fue al hospital regional, un lugar desconfiado por muchos por los cuestionables servicios que ofrecían a los ciudadanos y sobre todo, por la precariedad de sus instalaciones. ¿Os imagináis ver cucarachas, ratones, termes en un hospital público?

Ella prefirió ir a aquel lugar sin más, y porque tampoco se fiaba del chino. Desde que el chino llegó a abrir aquel espacio para la salud para todos, ella estuvo observando los servicios que dispensaba y

después de mucho tiempo se preguntaba cómo podría prescribir un médico un medicamento a un paciente sin antes hacerle unos exámenes para conocer lo que le adolecía?

El amigo chino, que así le llamaban, apenas entendía el castellano, ni mucho menos una lengua local, pero una vez que veía a un paciente entrar en su “*Consultorio Chino*” adolecido de algo, le decía primeramente el precio de la consulta, para luego llevarle a una pequeña habitación donde el enfermo le explicaba lo que sentía y de escucharle sin entender nada, iba a un mostrador donde sacaba jeringas y le perforaba el culo. El chino le perforaba el culo y le decía que debía pasar el día siguiente, el siguiente y el día siguiente para perforarle el culo para sanarle de una enfermedad que uno no conocía.

Ella decidió ir al hospital, sacaron muestra de su sangre, que examinaron. Cuando fue a recoger el resultado de los análisis. - - - - -
- - - - - muchos negativos que ella no entendió, porque le seguía doliendo la cabeza. El médico le recetó “*Paracetamol*” y la recomendó descansar y beber mucha agua.

Ella hizo caso al médico, compró los comprimidos a disgusto, porque no entendía por qué aquellos resultados fueron “negativos”. Era un dolor de cabeza que no cesaba, pero por suerte no tenía fiebre y tenía la hemoglobina alta. Simplemente era un dolor de cabeza fastidioso. Tampoco el dolor de cabeza fue el causante de aquella decisión que tomo aquella mañana.

Ella se cansó y no pudo contenerse. ¿De qué?

No vayan a pensar que era violenta y que por eso se metió en un desaguisado que la hizo tener el problema que tuvo. Alguna vez se peleó verbalmente con algún vecino y alguna vecina. Eso hacía mucho, en su edad de pubertad. Y cuando se acordaba de aquellas peleas le entraba una enorme vergüenza. Pero le calmaba saber que eran en defensa propia y que si pudiera rebobinar el tiempo, lo gestionaría de otra manera.

Ella creció en el barrio que os describí anteriormente, pero era diferente. Por las tardes dedicaba su tiempo en dar clases particulares a todos los chavales del barrio que se acercaban a su habitación. No tenía amigos conocidos y andaba con un par de chicas que como ella tenían la cabeza rapada. Se ponían pantalones vaqueros y esa manera de vestir hizo que les llamasen lesbianas.

Ella y ellas, estaban acostumbradas a que se les llamara así. No se sentían ofendidas y simplemente aunque sin reconocer que lo eran decían que cualquier ser humano estaba en su derecho de hacer lo que le saliera de las narices siempre y cuando no atropellase los derechos y libertades de los otros. Ella y ellas las llamaban bolleras, lesbianas. Pero eso, no era lo que le hizo cabrearse. No.

Antes de acostarse le gustaba leer un libro y no tenía preferencias. Simplemente le gustaba leer y acostumbraba a explicar que leer antes de acostarse le permitía soñar y levantarse con energía llevadera. Pero por las mañanas también le gustaba echar una miradita al pequeño televisor que tenía sobre una mesita porque le gustaba informarse. Pero una semana antes de hacer lo que hizo ya estaba harta de mirar y ver lo que enseñan en aquellos canales, pura basura tóxica. Dijo.

Una semana antes de tomar aquella decisión, ya comenzaba con aquel dolor de cabeza que le llevó al hospital. Mirar la tele y escuchar noticias de muertes masivas, presumir de lanzar bombas madre de todas las bombas sobre seres humanos, de los desafíos nucleares, de discursos de presidentes eternos en el poder, de las noticias de los miles y millones de hombres, mujeres y niños que tenían que huir de sus hogares asediados por guerras, hambruna y desestabilizaciones políticas. Ella se cansó y por eso aquella mañana, cansada de no poder mirar nada agradable, prefirió ir a echar aquella tele en el contenedor de basura más cercano.

Sus amigas cuando llegaron y escucharon lo que les dijo ella, le dijeron que estaba LOCA.

El sueño del prócer

Luis Felipe Lomelí

Dom Fernando NegreirosPombal tuvo un sueño esclarecedor. Un sueño que le infundió recelo, tal vez alarma, en él. Mientras soñaba, afuera era una noche fresca de primavera en Lisboa, llena de estrellas porque era el siglo dieciocho y, como todos saben, la luz eléctrica aún no había sido inventada. Así, era una noche muy linda, sólo que dentro del sueño no había belleza alguna para don Fernando: soñaba que era un esclavo de sus esclavos, que sus esclavos eran ahora sus patrones blancos y que él les pertenecía. Don Fernando quería decir, dentro del sueño, que no era prieto, que era cristiano blanco y que él era el dueño legítimo de ellos. Mas no podía. No podía porque tenía otras cosas más importantes que hacer como cargar piedras, soportar el hambre, el látigo, y procurar no morir para ser arrojado afuera de la ciudad como alimento para los perros.

Dom Fernando Negreiros Pombal se despertó muy preocupado. Pero tuvo una revelación: ya no vendería más esclavos en Lisboa sino que sólo continuaría con su negocio en el Brasil. Ese día, para quedar más sosegado, Dom Fernando asesinó a sus treinta y cinco esclavos. Es considerado uno de los padres de la lucha contra la esclavitud.

Breve introducción al futuro estudio del canibalismo

Luis Felipe Lomeli

Durante el siglo XVI se creó el mito de que había pueblos caníbales, gente bárbara que llegaba de la nada, cada cuando pero cada vez más seguido y se llevaba hombres y mujeres, jóvenes, sobre todo niños. Se decía que les gustaban tiernitos y los echaban en ollas grandes de hierro para hacer caldos. Se hablaba de reyes que todos los días se almorzaban un infante, también de que hacían danzas y ritos siniestros alrededor del fuego.

Muchos años después se supo que todo esto era falso, puro invento, que lo que en realidad sucedía era que se llevaban a esos jóvenes y niños para esclavizarlos en otros continentes, en América y Europa, y que ahí los encadenaban y violaban y a veces los mataban a azotes pero —hasta donde hemos podido investigar— no hay prueba de que se los comieran. Es entendible que lo hayan pensado así, que hayan procurado el horror para explicar el horror de ver cómo se llevaban a su gente, viva, de forma regular. Lo que resulta más extraño es que los bárbaros también dijeran que sus esclavos eran caníbales. Y crearan leyendas, películas y hasta caricaturas al respecto. Explicar esto, sin duda, es tarea de los historiadores del futuro.

EL EXTRAÑO CAZADOR

Juan Riochí Siafá

Era un hombre especial, misterioso y singular. Vivía en una pequeña aldea situada a cincuenta kilómetros de la capital. Nadie conocía su procedencia, y tampoco ningún semejante se atrevía a preguntarle. Su presencia infundía respeto y miedo al mismo tiempo. Era fuerte, alto y grande. Vivía en una casa vieja, pequeña y antigua, construida en una de las orillas del río situado a las afueras del poblado. Cerca de su morada no crecía vida vegetal alguna, un extraño fenómeno que dejaba perplejo a todo el que pasaba cerca de la primitiva construcción. Parecía arrancarlas por la noche, o que tuviera ayuda de algún espíritu, pues en la aldea era habitual ver a las mujeres, por las mañanas, extrayendo de la tierra las malas hierbas que brotaban alrededor de las viviendas. Ninguna de ellas atendía la casa del hombre extraño, no se atrevían.

La morada del misterioso individuo tenía ventanas, pero nunca las abría. Nadie sabía cuándo se encontraba dentro. Los niños más valientes se acercaban por allí a menudo para recabar información; algunos se quedaban haciendo guardia para ver qué podían descubrir, si bien, a pesar de tanto esfuerzo, ninguno lograba desentrañar los secretos que escondía aquel extraño habitante del asentamiento.

El insólito personaje se despertaba muy temprano, cogía sus herramientas de caza y se adentraba en lo más profundo de la selva. Pasaban días, semanas y meses sin que volviera a hacer acto de presencia, pues la noble ocupación de la caza de animales absorbía sus sentidos. Cuando regresaba, entregaba todo lo que había capturado a las mujeres del poblado. Lo hacía sin pronunciar ni una sola palabra. Parecía mudo, o eso creían los habitantes del asentamiento. Las mujeres, como señal de gratitud, le ofrecían alimentos y frutas, pero él nunca los aceptaba. Entregaba los víveres y se marchaba en seguida, sin mediar palabra.

Asistía con regularidad a la Casa de la Palabra, lugar de reunión donde se repartía justicia y se debatían los problemas que afectaban al poblado. Observaba con atención y escuchaba todo lo que decían sin emitir parecer alguno.

—¿Qué opina usted al respecto? —le preguntó en una ocasión el jefe del pueblo, que en aquellos momentos presidía la mesa de reunión. Él hombre extraño continuó de pie, en una esquina y sin inmutarse, con los brazos cruzados y la cabeza inclinada, mirando al suelo—. Señor, le he preguntado qué opina al respecto. Estamos debatiendo temas que afectan a la comunidad. Usted reside en la aldea y creemos que su opinión cuenta —insistió el jefe. El individuo seguía en la misma postura, sin pronunciar ni una sola palabra, como si todo aquel discurso no fuera con él.

—De tener opinión, creo que este hombre nos la habría dado —manifestó otro de los ancianos que se encontraba en la mesa de debate y que sujetaba un bastón.

Las reuniones se celebraban a diario. Los ancianos, a través de los informadores de las aldeas vecinas, pudieron enterarse de que las tropas coloniales se estaban aproximando cada vez más. Los extranjeros habían matado, secuestrado y expropiado las tierras de los habitantes de los distintos pueblos de la isla. Esgrimiendo biblias, crucifijos y algunas baratijas traídas de Europa, lograron engañar a los pacíficos habitantes de aquellas tierras. Con esas estrategias, consiguieron adentrarse en las aldeas.

Tuvieron lugar encendidos debates en el seno de la tribu, con idea de trazar un plan y eliminar el peligro que se avecinaba. Los ancianos exhibieron toda su inteligencia, exponiendo las tácticas de guerra ancestrales aprendidas y heredadas de sus padres y abuelos, que a su vez habían servido en el ejército real. Los sacerdotes, a su vez, invocaron a los antepasados, pero esto no sirvió para idear un plan que funcionara y que resultara eficaz para combatir al enemigo.

Hacía meses que el rey de la isla había muerto a manos de los colonizadores. Su espíritu seguía rondando los alrededores del

poblado, ya que los blancos no consintieron en darle al monarca la sepultura que merecía. Nadie parecía tener claro qué había hecho el invasor con su cadáver. Algunos llegaron a pensar que los blancos habían comido su cuerpo, o que incluso podrían haberlo sacrificado para apoderarse de su sabiduría y su fuerza.

Aquella era la única aldea que quedaba en pie, el único lugar donde el hombre blanco no había pisado hasta el momento, y sus gentes eran el último de los pueblos capaces de luchar y combatir la enfermedad que arrastraban los intrusos: el colonialismo, una fiebre letal y malsana que había subyugado a todas las aldeas de la isla. Los pueblos que se encontraban al lado de la costa se alejaron, huyendo de aquel peligro, y los hombres aprendieron a cazar, los niños a trepar por las palmeras y las mujeres a cultivar el campo, pues en las montañas no había otra forma de subsistencia. Los usurpadores, gracias a sus armas de fuego, arrasaron con todo e incluso resolvieron prohibir las ceremonias tradicionales, destruir los templos y profanar las tumbas de los ancestros que descansaban en la sagrada tierra de aquellas gentes.

Un día, el hombre misterioso se adentró solo en el bosque, tal y como venía haciendo hasta entonces; esa vez, sin embargo, sería para siempre: nunca más regresaría. Pasaron días, semanas y meses... y los habitantes del asentamiento continuaban sin tener noticias suyas. Las mujeres, como siempre, miraban por las rejillas de las ventanas para ver si aparecía, ya que el enigmático sujeto era el que abastecía de carne fresca a los pobladores de aquellas tierras.

La gran familia de la tribu se reunió y decidió trazar un plan de búsqueda, pese a que nadie se hacía idea de en qué punto de la selva se encontraría. Cuando aquel hombre se metía en el bosque, se trasladaba hasta lo más profundo de la floresta, donde apenas llegaba el resto de cazadores de la aldea. Pero, lo que ignoraban, era que el misterioso personaje había decidido sacrificar su vida por el pueblo, y él solo, sin ayuda de nadie, había conseguido combatir y vencer a los soldados del ejército colonial que se encontraban perdidos en las

profundidades de la jungla, ignorando los secretos y peligros que escondía.

Los habitantes del poblado esperaron y esperaron. No tardaron en darse cuenta de que el peligro se había disipado. Los ancianos del poblado, perplejos, viendo que era un asunto importante, convocaron una reunión urgente, pues debían desentrañar las claves de aquel suceso entre todos. Para ello, recurrieron a los oráculos y convocaron a los sacerdotes veteranos, ya que confiaban en que ellos, y solo ellos, podrían dar respuestas y esclarecer la situación.

El sacerdote más antiguo tomó la palabra y les anunció que aquel hombre que había vivido entre ellos no era un ser humano como el resto, aunque muchos ya lo venían sospechando. Aquel hombre era el espíritu encarnado del Rey Ėsaasi Eweera¹, que había venido a salvar al pueblo de la invasión colonial. Viendo el peligro acercarse, el extraño individuo que siempre andaba solo se convirtió en tigre y devoró a todos los soldados, sin dejar rastro alguno de ellos. El espíritu del monarca, encarnado en el singular cazador, había protegido al pueblo de la desgracia y de la enfermedad del hombre blanco. Con aquella victoria, conseguirían construir un nuevo pueblo, mantener la cultura ancestral viva y transmitir los ritos y ceremonias de los dioses de generación en generación.

¹ Monarca Bubi (isla de Bioko, Guinea Ecuatorial) que luchó forzosamente contra los colonizadores con la finalidad de evitar que su pueblo fuera invadido. Murió víctima de la opresión colonizadora en 1904. Después de su muerte, le sucederá el Monarca Malabo Löpelo Mëlaka, que reinó de 1904 a 1937. Citado en Juan Riochí Siafá. *Redes Migratorias e Inserción Laboral de los guineoecuatorianos*. Sial/Casa de África, 2016, pág.31-32.

The Water Cycle- A Novel Extract

Andrew Nyongesa

He was going to be circumcised. What delightful news! Buchacha's great grandson would soon be initiated into manhood. Word went from Cheleba to Rikai. Indeed the offspring of a great man is grand. Cheleba beamed with hilarity and butterflies fluttered merrily exulting in their short life. Everything was bright and cheery. People erected emblems of life everywhere. The Mauka's were the happiest on Mount Masaba to prepare this occasion to initiate a descendant of a 'valiant' man whose name carried granaries of his valiant acts; a man whose character was refined by peril and judgments, by the outcome. Who else but Buchacha epitomized manhood? Here had come a moment to circumcise a son entitled to his leopard skin in Mauka's house. Merry voices and laughter flew over the village. There was clanging of bells, blowing of horns, shouting of children and thumping of feet. They echoed and re-echoed in Cheleba from the earliest of dusk to the latest of dawn. The happy cheers accompanying pots of Busaa transformed Cheleba overnight. Noise and bustle; song and dance painted the entire landscape.

To many souls the rite brings long moments of leisure and pleasure. How many kinsmen scattered in Kitali, Bangamek and the city in their toils for survival are bound back to society in a happy state of love? It is an invariable rite and a man who evades it is a misfit. He is an abomination and will never be buried with a foreskin to defile the land of Mwambu and Sela. He would be circumcised on his death mat before burial. Even *bamia*, the Iteso, who lived among

the sons of Mwambu had to lose that skin to save the land from defilement.

Kisiang'ani heard about black people joining *Lechekeo* (legislative council). He could not make anything of it until Butilu explained that an African, Wamba Mathuu, had joined the whites in Nairobi to rule. He also heard that other people on the other mountain where Maina Wanalukale lived, were demanding for their land. Kisiang'ani did not understand why these people complained about land when in fact Mauka had more than enough for himself. Why wouldn't they go to Mount Masaba?

Kisiang'ani had a soft spot for the colonialist. Had he not saved his maternal grand father? He had filched him from the claws of famine in Masolo and given him a job. Raised by fate as an orphan, Wekutu, Butilu's father, had barely lived on porridge in Masolo. With the coming of the white man, he had got employed as a herder in Kitali. Hamstrung, the master, gave him a few coins with which he had bought six head of cattle. After leaving the master's farm, he had reared them well. In six seasons, he had raised eighty heads of cattle.

Wekutu's fame had spread like an invention in Sirisia, Nalondo, Namwesi and Sitabicha. This was a man whose Ugali was prepared using milk and his wife, Nanjala took the whole day milking his cows.

Nonetheless, colonialist or no colonialist, Kisiang'ani saw ahead of him the most trying moment of his life. It was a rite that inculcated a high moral in the initiates. It made him look forward with pleasant anticipation of the privileges that awaited the adults (initiated). Perhaps after it, his father would set him free to release oxen on the farm.

Among all the sons of Mwambu, circumcision ceremony was a furnace through which impure gold was refined into pure. It was the hearth on which raw milk was heated into an edible. It was a class for sex education, a house of rebuke and a theatre for presentation of love songs. It was a dais on which the candidate stood to tell the 'whole world' that he was no longer a boy but a mature man. Able to

take someone's daughter to protect and provide for. Able to confront the storms of life and prevail. During this occasion, tears and fears were bled out and courage injected in the boy.

In spite of his poverty, Mauka could not be a let-down in this season of merriment when childhood was preparing to painfully pass away from his son. He had offered a fat bull to fulfill the pressing role of a father. Other plans were underway...

Kisiang'ani had been effectively drilled in preparation for the ceremony through what was called *prakitisi* (rehearsals). It began as early as April. He was taught how to put on the clung and strike the hammer on it. The hammer was a steel rod with a hollow cylindrical base. It was grasped by the fore finger and thumb and struck on the clung to produce a clanging sound. It was during *prakitisi* that Kisiang'ani was taught the science of making beads. He picked them, dried and stringed them. He wore them across the chest from left to right side of the neck and vice versa. Kisiang'ani was introduced to the whistle. It was blown to produce a shrill sound to the rhythm of the song. He was then encouraged to jangle the bells at a pace consistent to the beat of the song.

Beads flung methodically across the back with a chirping sound as the clanging bells supplied the beat to harmonize the dance. Boys and girls left home at the infancy of the night to go and sing circumcision songs to prepare Kisiang'ani for his initiation. There were veteran heroes of Cheleba who sometimes struck the bells with such stamina that they shattered into pieces. Such candidates were revered and graduated from the season with a trail of girls after them. Wamalwa, Sitawa's father, had such a repute.

Having done with *prakitisi*, Kisiang'ani was ready to begin the first stage of initiation the following day. All his dreams nowadays bore constant reference to circumcision. Around him was bright and pleasant. The sunlight, the flowers and air proclaimed warmth and amity. Mauka who always had a grimace now afforded a smile.

The following morning saw the launching of *Khuchukhila*, in the home. Mauka rose at sun-up and after taking his yester supper, he looked prepared to give some instructions to his son. He was in high spirits but controlled his emotions to approach the crucial moment with a coolness that characterized true manhood. He summoned his son and gave him the preface of the rite.

“Do not worry son,” Mauka said in a happy frame of mind, “the knife is not painful.” He then dismissed his son.

As the sun rose to the centre of the sky, neighbours started strolling into the compound to witness the ceremony of initiation of Kisiang’ani, a son of great ancestry. Sitawa had got word and she would not miss it.

Cheery crowds arrived in the home and found Mauka pacing up and down in a state of anxiety and ecstasy. Kisiang’ani was given a cooking pot to go straight and fetch water at the river. Meanwhile, Butilu was busy preparing busaa, local brew, to serve men attendants of the ceremony. She was grinding yeast on the grinding stones to add in the fried fermented flour.

Kisiang’ani reached the river and drew water in the pot. He hoisted it onto his head and trudged up the rising terrain without looking back. This was the last time Kisiang’ani was carrying water on his head and obeying errands of that nature. He would never be sent to fetch water at the river or choose to do it hence forth. What would women do? He would soon be a man.

He arrived in front of his father’s hut and cautiously unloaded the pot from his head. There was another pot on the ground in which Mauka ordered him to pour the water. That is what he meant. Any careless gush that resulted in spills had ill consequences-he would be circumcised bit by bit and how painful it would be.

Inside the pot was ground yeast churned with fermented maize flour. A crowd of people with curious faces stood around the pot as Mauka churned the mixture in preparation for the next stage.

He stirred and coalesced the mixture. Then, raising his eyes onto his son's, he insulted him vehemently for five minutes. Kisiang'ani clanged his bells without a flicker of the eyelid. Mauka motioned him to stop clanging bells and be alert.

"As a man you just come thus, without a flicker of an eye lid," Mauka thundered. Everything was dead quiet. Silence was a curious audience of the event.

"Your mother's cowardice ends now," he roared, "if you cower from the knife, you inherited your uncle's blood!" He gashed a handful of molten mixture from the pot and flung it at his chest.

"Buchacha never cowered! Neither did I!"

The ball struck his chest with a thud and sprayed in random jets. They lay siege to his eyes and in a reflex the eyelids flickered to ward off the awful intrusion. Mauka smacked him.

"That's feminine fear!" He snarled.

He slapped him again. Kisiang'ani evinced no sign of joy, forthwith. Beads of tears gleamed on his eyes.

"Take cowardice to your mother! You don't cry here!" Thundered Mauka.

Wambilianga soloed a circumcision chant to wind up the stage. Men raised their staffs high and sang:

Soloist: Oh, oo, oh!

Oh, oo, oh!

Crowd: Ooh! Oh, oh!

Ooh! Oh, oh!

Soloist: Musinde nolire Ebunyolo

If you fear go to Ebunyolo

Crowd: Aaoh! Aoh, oo!

Aaoh! Aoh, oo!

Maratani then smeared him with the molten mixture from head, forehead, chest, down to the calf and toes. Wambilianga soloed a song and the home was thrown into frenzy. Uproarious was the mirth of the crowd as it responded to the enthusiastic chants in the

extreme of wildest joy. They chanted stamping their feet and dancing. They went round and round with all their strengths.

Kisiang'ani forgot his sorrows. He disposed his sulks and exulted in the bliss of the momentary excitement. He hopped back and forth, resonated his back methodically and jangled his bells with dexterity; prancing round and round to the pace of the song. He gripped his whistle firmly between his lips. It groaned with the melancholy of the song. His beads swung across the back sweeping off the cold stuff.

Wambilianga stood in front of him to teach him new styles. He had to imitate everything. Down down they went, up up they rose; shaking their shoulders and arms to the beat of the song.

Kisiang'ani then blew the whistle to signify that he had left the home to invite friends and relatives to attend a ceremony that marked his transition to adulthood. As the hot sun sucked the moisture from the stuff, he turned to a bipedal white antelope, clanging bells.

Being the first day, they called on those relatives in proximity. Upon arrival, the singers would stamp their feet to the beat of the song. Kisiang'ani would prance with his chest a few inches from the ground, his bells jangling to the throb of the soloists' voice. He would vibrate his chest with all the beauty his mind could lay hands on.

The soloists' voice swirled with such passion that no son of Mwambu would hear and remain the same. They were songs that thrilled gaily and dismally; reproaching deviants, admonishing hyenas; pulling down the fort of vice and setting up the foundation to a hedge of virtues in line with the customs of the sons of Mwambu.

And the mobile crew behind him reached out for their voices and attacked the songs at the highest pitch of their lungs. Volleys of insults were directed at the man Situma Barasa. They sung about him as a stupid man whose daughters never touched the hoe. He was a woman as he carried a pot on his head while his wives watched, he was a weakling who cooked for his family; a hermit who greeted nobody. How excited Mauka was with these pieces.

“These are true sons of Mwambu,” he muttered, “they are not ruined like my son!” He added. Mauka could not bring himself to the belief that a descendant of Buchacha would waste as a vagabond at Chebyuk? to afford a bowl of white man’s refuse at the iron sheets. Why would his son not sit down and nurture what Buchacha left behind?

“A scavenger indeed!” He muttered and took an emphatic pinch of snuff as a tribute to the deviance of his son.

He saw his son in a very delicate situation; at the precipice of loss. Kisiang’ani had stood at the gate of the damp ways of the white man; the man who had massacred his ancestors in the plains at Chetambe without reason. What about his kinsmen? Heaps upon heaps, had lain dead, never to live again. Dead for sharing the air the man was breathing. Mauka could not forget it. The white man had stricken innocent souls by thunder and lightning. They had fled with their spears and shields to evade the consumptive flame but it had advanced like Wanangali and drowned them in river Nzoia.

Did his son know this? Did Butilu tell him these stories?

“It is women to tell these stories,” he muttered, “to nurture the Buchacha heart in him!”

How he yearned to reach out and right the wrongs in Kisiang’ani’s soul. He desired to plough down the tares that Situma had sown to groom a man as valiant as Buchacha. He wished his son understood the bad side of the ways of the white man. He would take him to Kitali to witness his cruelty.

Mauka wiped some stray grains of snuff from his upper lip and swore to start a crush program during the ceremony as his deliberate determination to crack down on alien values in his son. Nobody else suffered his pain. When one suffers an internal haemorrhage, it is only painful to him.

Who else knew how Buchacha had been forced at a withering age to shamefully leave his home and die as a fugitive in Masolo. The

white man supported by Bayobo mercenaries had frustrated the old man. Did Kisiang'ani know this? He was a victim of ignorance.

And the young men sang around Cheleba. Pretty girls with amorous gestures gyrated their waists provocatively. In each home, the father was given a chance to counsel the candidate after an ear piercing ululation and lively dance from the mother as sign of hospitality. The candidate had to tolerate vehement insults and spittle in severe cases with automaton rapidity. Arguments, complaints and protests were the worst tendencies to manifest then.

Having passed the test of humility and obedience, Kisiang'ani would be presented with a goat or heifer and the dance would set off for another home.

The following day was the day Kisiang'ani lived to recall. It was no easy day for him. It was a dry day with a dry bracing coldness; the paths were hard and grass crisp. They sprinted all the way from Cheleba to Kitali to invite his maternal uncle. They chanted sweet songs, he danced the rumba; he jangled his bells. Having borne the clangs for three days, his wrists vibrated with streaks of pain.

Wetuya, for that was the uncle's name, was a haggard looking shabbily clad man with ridges of privation on his face. He felt his poverty; he manifested it through his subdued tone of voice. But he had doled out a fat bull for slaughter as custom stipulated. He was a man; his wife Nelima would testify. Though short of stature, he confronted gangs of Bayobos and solitarily threw them out of his home.

After the usual dancing and singing, Kisiang'ani stood still, clanging his bells with glaring eyes upon his uncle. Wetuya emitting an odour of busaa mingled with Marijuana, he gashed a handful of dung from the rumen and bending his fierce eyes on the nephew, hurled it on his chest.

"You just stand the knife thus without a flicker of an eyelid!" he snarled.

“I am your uncle and I stood the knife! Wekutu never ran away from it. If you cower from it then you inherited your father’s blood!” The man mumbled and flung another mound of dung. No one dared admonish him for the low tone of voice. They knew him. Wetuya was not the kind of man who gripped his spear and let the enemy go unscathed. He had never lost a duel. Villagers shied away from provoking his anger.

He stepped forward and grabbed one of Kisiang’ani’s bells as if to snatch it from him. Kisiang’ani seized it in a single jerk and was greeted with a roar of applause. He had known them as customary exams designed to screen him perfectly. There before his uncle, he had proved that Mauka had not forced him into initiation but he had voluntarily stood forward to enter into the furnace to be refined into an adult.

Wambilianga soloed the chant and milling voices sang it with a passion that clouded the home with a mysterious power. He knocked his bells, his soul ecstatically yielding to a bombardment of strange passion for something. He wept. Tears streamed as the chant roared around him. His heart craved circumcision.

Kisiang’ani got an insight into the nature of the rite. It went beyond the cutting of the foreskin and bound one to the blessings and curses of his ancestors.

The men at the sacrifices examined it to see whether the boy would ‘stand the knife’.

“He will,” Maratani announced and joy flew over the revellers.

An enormous chunk of meat was hewn from the neck, belly and testicles; holed at the top-end and lowered into his neck. It hung over his chest and the meat dangled above his stomach with the testicles upon his penis. His body emitted an awful stench of raw meat, yeast and fresh dung as he was led into a lonely hut for supper.

After the scanty meal, darkness closed in and a clap of thunder warned them of the approaching storm. The crowd had taken busaa

and they laughed at nothing and everything. Some still carried calabashes full of liquor.

Wambilianga set a song in motion, staggering here and there with a lamp; his voice hoarse and fierce. The crowd sung it passionately and danced with a vigour that reflected the meals that Wetuya had generously offered them. After a few feats of dance, Nyongesa motioned him to leave and he jogged along the middle of the crowd wearily and drearily enough towards Cheleba. He had to be circumcised the following day.

The crew reeled along, young women and young men tipsy, staggering on miry sloppy paths. They bumped into trees and wild animals; boozing, insulting, shouting, singing and dancing. The girls swayed their hips while harmonizing the songs with soprano and alto. Wambilianga paved the way with the lantern and Kisiang'ani followed jangling all the way home. His meat and the untidy pair of shorts were the only cover against the pelting fall of rain and the cold draughts of the night. Busaa inspirited the jovial revellers to bid defiance to the ferocious attack of nature. They arrived home at three in the morning, in a stampede. Butilu emerged from the kitchen like an arrow and pierced the cold air with a screeching ululation. The home was thrown astir. A crowd of relatives who had arrived from 'all corners of the world' spilled to the front of Butilu's hut to join the spirited dance.

Round and round the crowd ran, up and up Kisiang'ani rose; down and down he bent and kaka the clangs sounded, his back resonating to the beat of the song. His meat swept the ground, his father's land. Everything was at the peak. There were multitudinous roars, Kisiang'ani's vibration of the back at right angles to the ground and prancing into the revolving crowd to create space.

What a dance! It was the kind that could provoke an elderly to defy the limits of menopause and enjoy their honey moon. In short,

there was not a more pleasurable season among the sons of Mwambu than circumcision.

There was Mauka with a bright look, there was Wamalwa with a brighter face. There were relatives in the home. It was a moment to know your cousin's cousin's cousin and your aunt's nephew's cousin.

Mauka swaggered towards the candidate with airs of the most important person on the occasion. His lion gait manifested his significance. He approached his son and roared,

"The morning is here! Don't tremble in your knees with your mother's cowardice!" He removed the meat from the neck and purred, "A man you just match that way! Without a flicker of an eye!" He retreated and handed the meat over to his sister, Repa. She darted into the kitchen with it, her mouth salivating.

Mauka then scooped bull dung from the rumen of the slain bull and hurled it at Kisiang'ani's chest. Nyongesa soloed the circumcision chant and the crowd sang in once more.

"You must leave bad manners today!" Mauka snarled descending a fiery slap at Kisiang'ani. Tears of bitterness lingered on his glaring eyes as a ball of phlegm reached his face. They were an intoxication of busaa. Kisiang'ani struggled with the temptation to hate his father. He suspected revenge but he had no room for questions; custom had to be fulfilled.

He was a stooge before his kinsmen. They would pee in his mouth as long as it was reasonable enough to be counted as a means of inculcating discipline in him.

As Mauka was still thinking of another way of persecution, Wamalwa appeared at the scene and took the boy to a special hut. Well acquainted with custom, he realized that Mauka had gone overboard.

Inside the hut, Kisiang'ani was served with half roast, salt less chips of meat and ugali. He was warned against washing hands before the meal and tearing the meat with canines. Any disobedience would

yield the penalty of bit by bit circumcision. He swallowed the chips in haste amid a terrible odour of cow dung.

Kisiang'ani was transferred into another hut where he met old men who mastered the customs of his people.

"Remove your shorts!" roared Matumbai of stern face.

He hesitated; he threw it down. Matumbai grabbed the organ and pushed the foreskin backwards.

"Ugh! How impotent you are!" He exclaimed.

The skin could not go beyond the head.

"Ugh, Pooh!" Spat Wetala.

Wamalwa remained calm and collected.

"You mean you have never taken a girl to the bush?" Asked Matumbai.

He struck his staff on the ground.

"They're symptoms of impotence!" Mauka roared with a vibrating bass.

"Tomorrow he'll pay for his impotence!" Warned Matumbai

"Papa, it's not a serious problem," said Wamalwa, "Wambaya's assistant will finish it before the knife,"

"After this, ensure you lay a girl," asserted Matumbai. "Don't just louse around, sleep with a woman or you'll die without children and bring shame on your ancestors!"

"You'll then not be buried normally," Wetala added, "another door will be faked at the back of your hut to pass your corpse to the grave, right?"

Kisiang'ani nodded with automaton rapidity.

"And if you don't get a girl to assist you hatch, go to your paternal aunt, she'll assist you," Wetala advised

"Oh no, is that custom?" Wamalwa doubted

"Wamalwa, why does the paternal aunt take the meat with the bull's penis from the boy?" Asked Matumbai.

"I think that applies in rare cases where the boy has disability or..." explained Wamalwa.

“Wamalwa, a female monitor lizard told its male counterpart to enquire to understand these things. I encourage you to enquire; you are getting lost!” Asserted Mauka.

Kisiang’ani was driven to the field again; it was 4 am. The moon was suffocated by dark clouds. It was a fine dry night, faint dark though.

Young men and men drank heartily and laughed at anything. The youth paired up in preparation for the imminent dance and other passionate issues they knew better. There were chorus demands for hot water by the straw shaking men in Mauka’s hut. Butilu with her fellow women ran round and round to add hot water in the pot of busaa.

With Kisiang’ani’s reappearance on the ground, there ensued a germination of joy and Wambilianga who had assumed the professional name master soloed a moving song. The milling crowd brought their lungs into full use and there arose one might roar of noise and bustle. There was screaming of women, banging of doors and rolling of obscenities. There was order and confusion; disobedience in obedience. Freedom adorned every shoulder. Virtuous insults flew in the air. There was a moral fornication for young adults as long as the maiden remained a virgin. There was a space for moral adultery as long as the owner got you not. It was night devoted to feasting, wooing, seducing and caressing. The cheerful light of blazing fires, the clowns in the theatre and the cheery audience made the Maukas historic.

Vehicles were manufactured to shift Kisiang’ani into adulthood. A vehicle was an even number of boys and girls who held one another at the shoulder and ran round and round the candidate. After a few rotations, it would break loose and disappear in pairs. A boy would take the girl somewhere for a date.

Kisiang’ani grew tired and tears glistened on his eyes. Wetala stood before him with a lantern taunting him with obscenities.

“Your mother’s b-!” He insulted, whenever the boy flipped his eyelid. Kisiang’ani was astounded. How could he sleep with his aunt? What crime had his mother committed?

The rays of Venus splattered upon them. Cock crows ensued and Nyongesa led the customary song.

*Nyongesa: Okhabona surwe wekana, musinde
Do not Venus and retreat*

*Crowd: Aah! Aah! Okhabona surwe wekana. Aah! Aah!
Don’t see Venus and cower.*

Kisiang’ani was taken to the place of the mud on river Okoro. Rituals had been performed here to conjure up the spirit of circumcision. He threw his pair of shorts on the ground and there he was, nude.

“That thing is big,” a tipsy man croaked.

“Ugh, stop,” angry voices hushed him.

“Has it ever fitted its bolt?” The man teased again. The crowd flew into fits of laughter.

Kisiang’ani leapt into the icy mud and stood as erect as teak. Nyongesa flung a ball of freezing mud on his chest and growled.

“A man you just come that way! As you stand the knife all birds keep quiet. The woman you are going to marry will see you today. So never flip an eyelid. Never raise the heel and she is yours!”

He then daubed his body with mud. The depression between the forehead and the nose was filled with mud. Kisiang’ani resembled the flying snake that Mango killed. A big ball of mud was planted on his head; a special grass was stabbed on it to face skywards like an aerial.

Kisiang’ani was a serpent as he strutted home naked with a gait of a boy scout, going to raise a flag of her majesty’s queen of England. A voice set the circumcision chant in motion- that age-old song that was composed during Mango’s times- and the squad sang with enthusiasm.

A kilometre away from home, a woman crossed ahead and forward flew stones and staffs. Unspeakable insults followed suit.

“We shall break your cunt!” Nyongesa barked.

“Take it to your father!” a tipsy man snarled.

Three men ran after her, hurling what they could find at her. Kisiang’ani pitied the woman. Her kind were the worst creatures to cross ahead. Queen or princess, it never mattered. They were capable of anything...they staggered a few yards ahead and he was halted. Nyongesa repeated the monotonous advice.

“You just stand that way without a flicker of an eye!”

It was the surgeon’s moment to steal a glance at the foreskin to choose the suitable style at the critical moment.

The mighty battalion sang. As it approached home, they thinned out and the voices faded into the morning cold. Not the faintest rustle interrupted the tranquil in the home. He lumbered in the middle of the curious crowd, solitarily and wearily. He staggered towards the circumcision ground only to meet his sole guide: his harsh father, Mauka. He was clad in a leopard skin, a spear in his right and snuff in his left.

“You are my first born, named after my father, Kisiang’ani Kurima and you must not shame us. All these people watch to see how you face this enemy. Life is fire and you must be strong to stand its tests!”

Mauka led him to the last spot, a sisal sack with dry soil spread over it. In a streak, he felt the rapture of his virginity after a single backward push. A forward pull of the skin succeeded and commenced sharp stabs of pain with the shrill of a whistle to mark the end of his childhood.

Women ululated and men sang a war song while thumping their feet.

Yaya khwera Omurwa

Aah khwera Omurwa

Papa khwera Omurwa

Aah, khwera Omurwa

Sister we have killed Omurwa

Aaah we have killed Omurwa

Father we have killed Omurwa

Aah, we have killed Omurwa

It was tempestuous! What a state of happiness.

ZAPATOS BURROS

Gabriel Moraes

Hace un montón, pero montón de tiempo, újule que hasta mentira podría ser, entre ellos y mis días de cipote o de jovencito hubo algo, quizás bastante diría poniéndome la mano en el corazón.

Es que quiérase o no, los recuerdos rebalsando el vaso donde he tomado no me dejarían mentir. Por eso yo siempre he pasado de un sólo la página, porque puedo reconocirme a mí mismo y a nadie le gusta que le pongan el dedo en la llaga.

Yo no quería ni quiero regresar a esos momentos amargos. Quién no ha vivido un mal sabor de boca y no puede hacer nada para remediarlo, sino tragárselo como a sus propias palabras. Igualito me sucedía a mí, fuera donde fuera, mis pasos del presente estaban unidos con mis caminos polvorientos del ayer.

Ni más ni menos esto comenzó cuando mi papá me los llevo y sacándolos de una caja de cartón me dijo:

-Son tuyos, tenés que cuidarlos para que te duren bastante...

Ahí nació este sentimiento que me recorre desde la coronilla hasta las puntas de los dedos de los pies, ya sea en invierno o en verano, y que yo he tardado toda una vida en reconocer que sí me pertenece y le pertenezco; que es parte de mis penas y de mis alegrías, y no hay ni habrá manera de echarle tierra encima para hacerlo desaparecer.

Fuimos puestos en este mundo los unos para el otro, ellos para mí y yo para ellos; de niño lindo siempre me costaba ponérmelos, porque amarrarlos y hacerles el nudo en las cintas como debe ser, para mí era un callejón sin salida; pero eso sí, me los quitaba en un

cháschás. Cada noche había que limpiarlos, echarles pasta y lustrarlos con el cepillo hasta sacarles brillo como esos focos de colores que cuelgan espejeando en el techo del firmamento.

A la primera entrada no me cayeron ni mal ni bien, pero con el transcurrir de los grados en la escuela, de la edad y de la viveza que vas sumando como siete más siete, y al ir notando las diferencias del calzado tuyo comparado con el de los demás empantalonados, no había vuelta de hoja, y no hay peor juez que serlo vos mismo; tu imagen te hacía burlas, te enseñaba la lengua.

Viéndote los zapatos era tu cruda y cruel realidad a la que no podías, por mucho que quisieras, cortarla de tu presencia.

Con la almohada en la cabeza yo soñaba con no volvérmelos a calzar, convertirlos en zapatillas, mocasines de esos que se meten de un sólo; pero la varita mágica no es verdad, no existe, y ahí estaban cada mañana bajo la cama acechándome junto a los otros nefastos zapatos burros de mis hermanos. A ver dijo el ciego y muchas veces uno no mira lo que hace ni piensa lo que dice, y llegué a tenerles ojeriza, mala leche como les nombran a esos desagradecidos que escupen en la miel.

Según los pareceres de mis ojos eran los peores zapatos del mundo, los más feos, que te siguen como el ave negra de tu mala suerte; y tras corneado apaleado, sí se destrompan, te vuelven a comprar otros de los mismos. Les eché bola negra como a los peores enemigos, y haciendo una tormenta de una gota de agua, las cosas más insignificantes se interpusieron entre ellos y mis dos pies, porque yo quería alejarme lo más que podía de sus acercamientos y compañías, negar tres veces que los había andado puestos.

Cuando estos me iban cargando y me encontraba con zutano o mengano, uno quiere hacerse humo, que la tierra se lo trague para que no te los noten; haciéndome el disimulado lanzaba la mirada allá a la distancia como buscando el mar, que yo ni siquiera conocía, o chiflando sin poder hacerlo; sin saber que las miradas perdidas o engañadas son las del tipo que se quiere pasar de listo.

Cuando veía que mis zapatos burros estaban ahí abajo cubriéndome los pies a pesar de las mojadas de lluvia, los charcos o el frío, yo me decía calladito para mis adentros.

-Zapatos serotes, hijos de puta...

Al salir de mi casa eran dos pesadas hormas de plomo para las ignorancias del cuarto hijo de mi padre y de mi madre; y aunque corriera como la prisa, llegara donde llegara, siempre estaban pegaditos a mí, sin desprendérmelos, persiguiéndote como en la sangre dos maldiciones...Yo terminé la escuela, despuesito el bachillerato, cabal al año, una buena tarde, luego de finalizar unatreintena de mañaneadas en mi novel trabajo y recibir el primer sueldo, me fui hecho un cuete a una zapatería para que me las pagaran todas y reírme de ellos. Sacudiéndome sus suelas sombrías, músicos trompas de hule, los dejé tirados en la tienda como el bandido que abandona lo único salvable que todavía le quedaba...

Entonces llegué a creerme el sol que alumbra todos los días por el horizonte, ja, era el primero en la lista de los traicioneros, porque no se le debe hacer mala cara ni siquiera a las cosas que han estado en las buenas o en las malas contigo.

Así transcurrieron meses y años de no levantar banderas blancas de un amistad irrompible, de creérmelo que me bastaba yo solo para acomodarme el cuello de la camisa; Judas por traicionarme a mí mismo al negar lo que siempre he sido, engañándome como al más descarado de los mentirosos.

Y se me hizo el alma muerta, para eso de ponerme cara a cara con esos zapatos burros que nunca tuvieron la culpa de cómo fueron las circunstancias en que sudamos y aprendimos tantas veces juntos.

Quizás en algún momento nos encontramos, yo ya ni sé, yo estaba ciego de la pena como aquel que borra con el olvido sus acontecimientos, y sí los conocí... Ya no me acordaba.

De allá para acá y de acá para allá, yo iba campante por la vida dejando mis propias huellas; y me hice viejo, tanto, que la gente cree que mis hijos son mis nietos.

Cuando regreso de laborar pierdo minutos haciéndome el vagabundo, y me he aficionado a detenerme frente a los escaparates. Un atardecer estando mirándome fijamente en los cristales, a mí mismo me contesto: cuánto tiempo se han llevado las oscuras golondrinas...

Más allá de mi rostro, un par de zapatos finos y suaves me llamaron por mi nombre sin nombrarme, y me adentré emocionado cual si hubiera ganado el premio gordo de la lotería. Cuando me saludaron las dependientes devolví las buenas tardes, algo hizo volver mi curiosidad hacia un rincón del negocio: iluminados con una luz tenue, ahí estaban varios pares de zapatos burros.

¡Tantos años sin vernos...! ¿Cómo has estado viejo?

Oí claramente que me platicaban...

Y como si se aproximara una gran tormenta, salí a toda carrera del establecimiento porque algo había sobrecargado las pozas de mis ojos y no quería desparramarme frente a desconocidos o en la indiferente desvergüenza de las calles, tal vez dirían viejo estúpido, sentimental como esos chapados a la antigua.

No sé cómo llegué adonde sí me esperan, entré como Juan por su casa, vengo cansado hoy me toco ajetreado, me quiero recostar les dije.

Dios santo, cómo pude negar el gran amor de mi papá y de mi mamá en aquello que con grandes sacrificios nos compraban a mis otros hermanos y a mí; yo con apenas un hijo no le encuentro la punta al hilo. Cuántas veces ellos dos dejaron de comer para que no anduviéramos descalzos...

Me he vendido por menos de treinta monedas casi mi vida entera, teniendo la verdad enfrente. Y mi conciencia no aguantó más, mesolté como aquellos chubascos que llovían a cantaradas por los árboles de antes, y lloré como niño perdido, pero que regresa como el hijo pródigo para pedirles perdón de rodillas por todas estas desconsideraciones, aunque lo haga solo frente a sus fotografías.

Parecerá tema de locos, pero también les ofrecí disculpas a mis zapatos burros, y no van a creer lo que sucedió...

Como prueba suprema para que me otorgaran el borrón y cuenta nueva, me compré un par de ellos. Están con ganas de salir a pasear conmigo y los tengo debajo de mi cama, de dónde nunca hube de haberlos quitado.

THE HUNTER I AM

Tólá Ijálúsi

Leaving Ibàdàn for Aráròmi was a quest to accomplish. It was a sunny Saturday, the sky was blue and tiny clouds hung above. I had saw in the news last night the weather forecast for Ibàdàn to be 29° C. I arrived at the motor park, sat in the bus; the journey began, brought out a book in Yorùbá language and began reading. I was reading the history of the town called Ọsògùn.

Ọsògùn was the hometown of Bishop Samuel AjàyíCrowther, the boy sold into slave trade and when slave trade was abolished, he came back to Africa and became the first Anglican African bishop. He was the man who translated the Bible into Yorùbá language. My book kept me company; it was enlightening, as I had to read about a hunter who founded the hometown of AjàyíCrowther. The hunter had three wives but the three wives could not conceive. The wives blamed their husband for their infertility. He made up his mind to do something about it so he travelled to see a Babaláwo¹ who would give him potent magic medicine. When he got there, he met a funeral. The old man had kicked the bucket.

Full of anger and bitterness he began his journey back home. While travelling through the forest thinking of what to tell his wives, a thought came to him. The hunter killed a bird, dried the bird and grounded the bird's skin into powder.

When he arrived home, he called his three wives together. He gave them the powder to rob on their faces. His wives believed it was a magical powder; they robbed the powder on their faces on the night of a full moon as instructed by their husband.

Months later, the three wives gave birth to children. It was then the hunter told them the truth about the powder. It was this news that spread that made other hunters and their families join the hunter in his settlement. The settlement soon became populated and a he became the first king of the settlement, Ọ̀sògùn.

The journey to Arárọ̀mi was faster than I imagined. The thoughts of Adétutù flowed into my head. It has been two years since Adétutù left Ibàdàn for Arárọ̀mi, the moments we shared together was exclusively awesome, her soft left hand holding my hairy right hand, the gentle kiss she placed on my lips carefully and her departing words.

“I promise to take good care of myself, keep yourself” she said.

I can still remember the smile on the face of the woman I first fell in love with the last time I saw her; it was radiant and wishful. She was full of love, love that is pure. “She is an angel,” I said to myself as our eyes met for the last time. I would keep that promise; I swore an oath and come for you as soon as I return. I had earlier that month received a call from an Uncle who works for an auditing firm in Abuja to come work for him. Two years had passed; it was two years without love, two years of regret wishing I had stayed with her, the woman who redefined my definition of being in love.

It was evening time when I arrived in Arárọ̀mi. I alighted from the bus and found a small hotel, I checked in. Had a light shower, dressed up and brought out a ring. I walked into the street of Arárọ̀mi and began finding my way to the Oyèyẹ̀mi’s compound.

“Where are you going sir?”

A young man asked me. He was a vigilante I supposed.

“I am going to Chief Adétúnjì Oyèyẹ̀mi’s compound” I replied.

“Oh that’s the compound that has a Mango tree. Let me take you there.” He responded.

He led the way into a narrow street; at the far end of the street, I could see a Mango tree in a compound with a low fence.

“Under the mango tree in BàbáOyèyẹmí’s compound is where the children of Arárọmí sits every Saturday evening to hear the stories of the old wise man. Bàbá Oyèyẹmí is the village historic and cultural custodian.” My guide began.

“He knows almost every story of every great hunter and warrior of every town.” He continued.

“He has narrated the stories of the great Odùdúwà the father of the Yorúbá’s, Başọrun Gàà, Mọremí, Èfúnsetán Aníwúrà, Sàngó Alááfin of Oyo and of how his wife Oya who became a flowing river to the children. Bàbá Oyèyẹmí is eloquent in his narration. His narration of the stories would make you see yourself in the stories; he would describe the death of a warrior so vivid that the children listening to him would cry.”

“What brings you to Arárọmí?” He then questioned me.

“I came to see Adétutù” I answered.

Oh! Are you the man who promised Adétutù he would come for her?

“If you mean marriage, then, I am”. I replied looking into his eyes asking him what was hidden in his question.

“Tonight, the children of Arárọmí has gathered as usual waiting to hear from Bàbá Oyèyẹmí. He will attend to you after he is through with them.”

My guide said as he took his leave. I told him thank you but he became suddenly in a hurry to leave. I entered the compound; the children were sitting round the old man. Bàbá Oyèyẹmí began to tell them the story of *Ode A-fi-filà-perin*². It was a story that became a popular proverb. I began to listen, sat on a bench wait impatiently as to know what exactly the reaction in my guide’s question was.

Ọba³ Adésọgàn rose to the throne in one of the kingdoms in Yorúbá land. He was crowned king after all the rituals and sacrifices were offered to the gods. When he ascended the throne, all the things

in his kingdom was going on fine, the birds were singing as birds and rats were squeaking as rats. However, some who participated in contesting for the kingship were bitter. They employed every means to make sure the kingdom went uproar but all to no avail.

They later consorted to using *eyẹ gúnnugún*, the forbidden sacred bird against the kingdom. Immediately, the kingdom was troubled with various diseases, sudden death, the streams dried up and even the first son of Balógun died. The king immediately summon his Babaláwo who consulted the oracle. The Babaláwo said if the king can use the head of an elephant as a sacrifice, everything would go back being good as it was when he ascended the throne.

A hunter who could kill an elephant was rare so the king announced a reward. All the hunters in the kingdom went hunting for an Elephant but came back empty handed. Not long afterwards, a stranger, a hunter came to the palace of Ọba Adésògàn. He requested an audience with the king and his chiefs. He told them he would bring the head of an Elephant for the king. The king did not believe him for he appeared naive, young and did not tag charms on his clothes, as other hunters would do. The king then thought not to discourage the young man, he gave him the permission to go hunt in the forest.

At the entrance of the forest, the hunter took a gourdlet from his pocket and chanted an incantation

“A kì torí gbígbó pa ajá,
A kì torí kíkàn pa àgbò,
A kì torí wéré wéré pa orúkọ,
Súrù súrù ni esuru nsu,
A fà kà ni báàrà fà,
Bí isó ba balẹ̀ npòrá.
Gbobo ntí emi bá se lónì yí àségbé.”

He had not walked a far distance when he saw an Elephant. He then took off his cap and began chanting another incantation. The young hunter was not through with the incantation when the Elephant began sleeping. Immediately, he used his cap to slap the Elephant thrice on the head, the elephant fell and died. He brought out his sharp knife, cut off the head and took it to the king. The King was shocked and excited. The king gave him a handsome reward. Everyone, both women and children in the kingdom were praising him as a hunter who killed an Elephant using a cap. His fame grew fast around all the surrounding kingdoms.

Days later after the necessary sacrifices had be done and the kingdom had begun experiencing peace, the whole kingdom had begun being careful of him. Husbands warned their wives and mothers warned their children not to go around him saying, “He who used a cap to kill an elephant can use a cap to kill a human”. That was how the saying became a proverbial culture of the people ‘The honour of a hunter who kills an Elephants with a cap last awhile’.

Bàbá Oyèyemi continued saying, the proverb is used for one who thinks he or she had done an heroic deed when many knows fully well that the honour lasts only for a while and as well to one who is proud. He bid the children good night and send regards to their parents.

Bàbá Oyèyemí came sitting on Sàgbèdọba, a rocking chair in his veranda. A kerosene lantern was placed on a table across him, beside him was a radio; he tuned in and started listening to Amúlúdùn FM. I prostrated and greeted the old man, he was so excited to see me, and he said

“Arákùnrin, dide nílẹ̀, káábọ́”

He welcomed me. We began talking; it was my first time seeing him. I introduced myself and told him why I came. He looked

straight into my eyes and sighed heavily. Adétutù had told me quite about him.

“My father is in his 70s, a retired civil servant who worked for the state broadcasting corporation, state library and served as a board of advisor for the cultural centre at the state capital.” Her voice rolled into my head once again.

“You are a hunter, Chant Ijálá⁵.” Bàbá Oyèyẹmi spoke manly patting my shoulder. Now, I do not know which of the Hunters I am: the later, the former or none. His supper was ready he insisted I join him.

She brought the meal; it was àmàlà⁶ and ewédú⁷ with ẹranìgbẹ⁸. She knelt down as she placed the food on the table; soon she brought the washing bowl and a keg of ẹmu. In all her doing, I saw her beauty.

Glossary

Bàbáláwo¹: A person who has magical powers and charms who people consort.

Odẹ A-fi-filà-perin²: A hunter who kills an Elephant with a cap.

Ọba³: King

Arákùnrin, ñíde nílẹ̀, káábọ̀⁴: Young man, stand up, welcome

Ijálá⁵: Hunters song

Àmàlà⁶: A food prepared with yam flour.

Ewédú⁷: A type of vegetable soup.

Ẹranìgbẹ⁸: Bush meat

The Catch

Edith Knight M

I didn't go to school to get an education, no, I didn't care for a better future, enlightenment, knowledge or wait for the big one, '*emancipation*' as Miss Kitche always said. The reason I loved going to school was to escape the household chores. Yes, you heard me. School was my salvation from the hard tedious work including and not limited to early morning farm digging, firewood collecting, water fetching, cooking, child minding, washing clothes and corn grinding. The other reason I went to school was to get relief from mothers' supervision of the above chores. If it was up to me I would spend the entire day and night at school. Now, I am not slothful, but being an only girl meant that unlike other homesteads where work was shared, here, I independently undertook all domestic work. Mother, like all other mothers in the village was against us girls attending school. Not only were they deprived of the free labor which we provided in our homes but they felt we were going to make lazy housewives who would not fit the pattern of life in which we were born. But still they relented and let us go, since they would not have been given the free weekly ratio of bread, sugar and cooking oil from the mission house.

Our school was a small brick house which served as a treatment centre for the sick on Thursday mornings, food distribution point on Friday afternoons, meeting hall on Saturdays and as a church on Sundays. Because of its many functions, it was simply referred to as the mission house. The white men had built it a few moons ago and it was the only of its kind in the village. The entire village consisted of several hut filled homesteads built with rammed mud mixed with

dung and wattle, the walls were further strengthened with cane, and the roof grass thatched and woven with sisal. So when the white men with their laborers had started building their house with bricks that they first burnt, the entire village had camped at the construction site the first few days to see this mystery. My uncle Onjweru had spent the entire period observing the white men's black builders piling block after block and using steel or was it iron, and then covering the house not with grass but with metal sheets' and when it was finally complete we all went in day after day touching its smooth walls and floor and marveling at how cool it was inside. The white men who said we had to call them father, even though we were not their children had said they would teach us about their god in that place and all the families that came to listen and brought their children to be taught would be given weekly food provisions. That's how we had found ourselves in school.

At the beginning of the school moon we had been six girls in our senior class. Awino and Apiyo had been '*caught*' and were now safely married, Nyangis' parents had taken her to Korindo village to stay with her aunt until the end of the stone harvests as she had caused a taboo when she entered her parents hut. A girl who had started seeing her blood was forbidden to enter her parents hut as it would interfere with their reproductive powers. She had entered to soothe her baby sister who had been wailing endlessly in the hut, little did she know that she had sealed her fate and would never get the position of a chief wife as she now was to be married off to an old man with many wives. We all shuddered at the thought. That left only three girls in our class- Adongo, Nyajeri, and I. The senior boys had their classes outside in the tree shed, there was not a lot of teaching for them as the colonial officers would take them to join Kings African Rifles in the white man's land, lucky them. The younger children who were mixed occupied the hall. We occupied the office where we were not to touch anything at all, not even each other, only our slates and Miss Kitche taught us to Count, read and write.

“Adala, do you know you can be a teacher like me” Miss Kitche said, startling me in the middle of the writing lesson.

Miss Kitche was the prettiest cleanest woman I had ever seen. She had beautiful penciled eyebrows, burgundy painted lips and she would wear well cut colorful dresses with pumps on her feet. Her hair was always smooth and straight and when she stood next to you could smell her rose scented perfume. She could even speak fluent English for long hours with the mission men.

She continued “I see how you are so committed to school and how your grades are good. You can continue with school, and then go and train to become a teacher or a nurse. You can even be a secretary or a midwife” she stopped waiting for my answer.

“Is that so?” Adongo interjected besides me. “I want to be teacher just like you Miss Kitche and I will teach all the village children.”

“And I'm going to train to be a nurse” Nyajeri said.

And then all eyes turned to me. For the first time I wanted to leave the class and go back home. I felt so ashamed being in a room with these girls who clearly wanted to be *emancipated*. I didn't want to be any of those things Miss Kitche had said. I admired her but I didn't want to be like her, didn't everyone know that she was unmarried and yet she was past age? And even the diviner had asked pregnant women not to greet her when they met as their unborn children would suffer the same fate. At times the village women jeered at her as she passed their farms on her way home. The only way for her to be redeemed, they said, was for her to be absorbed into a polygamous marriage as a fourth or fifth wife.

“Well Adala?” Miss Kitche interrupted my thoughts looking at me squarely in the eye.

I forced a smile

I looked up at her, swallowed and quickly said “I don't want to be a teacher or a secretary or a nurse or a midwife.”

“What do you want to be or to do?” she asked looking puzzled.

“I don’t know, I just don’t know” I confessed.

“In that case prepare to be *caught* very soon” Adongo reminded me, snickering.

Miss Kitche just stared at me, the disappointment clearly showing on her face. Then she stared out of the window, watched the senior boys under the tree briefly, and then turned to me again.

To take my mind off the awkwardness, I continued scribbling on the slate. We were constructing words starting with the letter ‘T’ and so I wrote ‘*torn*’ over and over like my life depended on it.

Walking home from school that day I noticed the village anew, like I was a visitor. The river curled around the homesteads so that the village lay within its embrace. The red clay earth glistening as the sun rays shone down on it. All the farms were on the left side of the village, the sorghum and millet were growing well; the spirits were favoring us with a good harvest this season. I could hear the men laugh as they bathed in the river, I dared not look. My thoughts then went back to Miss Kitchens questions. Yes, it’s true I wanted to be caught as Adongo had said; grandmother had clearly taught me that it was my duty to the land, to become married and have babies for my husband and so to further the generation of our ancestors, which was my role as a woman. But not yet, I was yet to turn thirteen, I still wanted time, a lot of time for that matter. I had lied to Miss Kitche when I said I didn’t know what I wanted to do, I knew, but I was afraid she would have disapproved.

As soon as I entered our homestead I saw my mother, bent down sweeping the compound, dust devils dancing on the ground.

“Adala quick, finish sweeping the compound” she said handing me the broom “and then, run to the river and fetch water, I need four pots as there’s a lot of cooking to do today, then come back and wash your small brothers and dress them” She then hurried into the cooking hut leaving me rooted with shock.

I was surprised because my brothers had taken a bath two sunsets ago, which meant that they still had three more sunsets to bathe again,

and she had said to cloth them. Little children in our village just went around naked, clothes were a luxury and when necessary we only twined creepers around them. They were only dressed when attending the Sunday services at the mission house. I had to look for grandmother to find out what was happening.

“Your aunt Nerea is coming; she only gave the message to your father this morning in the market. She will soon be arriving with her people” Grandmother informed me when I asked her, not looking up from the cloth she was crocheting.

Grandmother and I were very close, firstly because I slept in her hut and she was therefore my teacher. Unlike Miss Kitche who taught me reading and writing, grandmother taught me the ways of the land and stories of our people, she taught me how I was to behave in my husband’s house and even how to please my in laws. She had said I was going to see my blood soon, and then I would be initiated into womanhood. When that happened I would be ‘*caught*’. She had told me about the catching process long before I witnessed Aunt Nereas.

My aunt Nerea had been caught the day the rooster crowed in the evening. She had been married to the neighboring village of Kajulu and we had not seen her since. She was grandmothers only daughter, my father’s only sister. I had been there during her catching; I could still picture it so clearly in my head.

The young man, known as Otieno, had come to see grandfather to ask for Nereas hand. After he had paid a deposit on the dowry, they had agreed on the general period of the catching, of course the specific date was not to be made known the bride’s family; it was at the discretion of the groom. On the eve of her catching one of the village women had come and given grandmother a bribe, it was called *chulo dboge bor*, the bribe was given so that grandmother would not give trouble during the catching when Nerea would be seized from the hut. The groom’s men had grabbed her as soon as she opened the door at the first cock crow that morning to light the fire for breakfast.

She had screamed so loudly waking all of us. Father and his friends had put up a mock fight, battling with sticks, as custom demanded and then she had been carried off, finally a bride. That was the fate that would soon be mine. I almost threw up at the thought of being captured by strange men at dawn. And yet if you were not captured but went voluntarily with your groom to their village, you would be insulted and scorned for the rest of your marriage life.

Nerea came with three other people that sunset; her husband Otieno, a young man called Ndigwa who was a friend to Otieno and a young woman, who was as clean and as beautiful as Miss Kitche. She wore the most colorful dress I had ever seen. She laughed so loudly in front of the men that grandma asked her to come and sit in the kitchen with us; she had no business sitting with the men after all. That evening after eating ugali, osuga and chicken we gathered round the fire as Nereas friend, Anyango, entertained us with stories about the city where she had come from. She was a registered midwife and practiced in the health centers built by the mission men in the city.

“As soon as your baby is born I'm going back to the city” she said to Nerea, surprising me as I had not noticed her swelling belly

“The villagers are too naïve for me, can you imagine they don't want me to attend to their wives as I am unmarried.” She expressed her disdain.

“Is it different in the city?” I asked her.

I could feel mothers' suspicious eyes on me. She clearly did not want me to engage this wayward worldly woman.

“Oh yes, the city is more accommodating” She replied. “Nobody cares about your marital status; there are endless opportunities there for both women and men. There's a women hostel where women who are in different training schools and those that work in various offices live. We are paid for our work at the end of every month; even domestic house helps are paid to do house chores and the men respect and treat us as equals.”

“Adela you should go to bed; it’s late and you have school tomorrow” mother suddenly said to me shocking even I’m sure, my ancestors’ spirits that were in our midst. Since when did she care for my schooling? She clearly didn’t want me to listen to what Anyango was saying. I begrudgingly got up and went into grandmother’s hut only to stand behind the door to eavesdrop on the ensuing conversation.

“You mean the women in the city are paid to do house work?” Mother asked occupying the space I had vacated next to Anyango. Clearly this news had shocked her.

“Yes, they are called housekeepers; families that are busy hire them to do chores and they are paid for that. But besides that, there are women in business, large business not like the ones in the village here where we give sorghum in exchange for pots. They bring materials, food and many things from different cities and sell for money. Some even work in the government doing important things.” Anyango finished.

“But unmarried, and therefore a shame to their people.” grandmother concluded clucking her tongue disapprovingly.

“I hear that in the city you can get married at whatever age you want, there’s no hurry.” Nerea finally contributed to this conversation. Grandmother just scoffed and that marked the end of that conversation.

The talk quickly moved on to Nereas pregnancy, mother telling her to stop drinking hot tea and gruel as it would scald the baby and to avoid bananas as it would fatten the baby and therefore strain her strength during delivery. When they stood up to invoke the spirits not to give Nerea twins as that was a bad omen, Anyango refused to join them as she said she didn’t believe in such things. I then retired to my sleeping mat, imagining myself in the city, as a free woman, living in the women hostels.

I woke up early that morning, to light the fire and start the day’s tasks. The daybreak had not woken yet, the sun was still deep in sleep

but the restless wind was already up and making its rounds. A few minutes later Anyango joined me in the kitchen.

“Tell me more about the city” I pleaded with her as I made tea.

And so that morning as I busied myself in the kitchen, my head was filled with stories about life in the city, about things I could not even start to imagine, they had piped water in the city houses, they didn’t have to fetch water in the river and they even cooked in the houses with electricity. They had toilets in the houses, and she assured me that they didn’t smell at all, this I refused to believe. She told me of tall buildings and vehicles and hotels where food was sold and even of cinemas where people went to watch others dramatize plays.

“If you want you can come to the city too, what do you want to do?” Anyango queried.

I decided to be honest with this stranger, to tell her what I had been scared of telling Miss Kitche and the girls in the class. What did I have to lose anyway?

“I would like to make clothes.” Anyango stopped washing the plates and stared up at me. I went on quickly before she could say anything. “I want to make beautiful colorful clothes for everyone to wear; clothes like the one Miss Kitche wears and little clothes for all the children to wear, so that they don’t always have to run around naked. I would like to make headgears for the women to tie on their heads. Can I do that in the city? I dared to ask.

“Oh yes!! They are called tailors. How original of you, there’s a tailoring school in the city or you can be taken in as an apprentice; trained by an established tailor till you can be independent.” She gushed, so excited for me.

I suddenly felt alive, it seemed like I had been born again, like my life had finally found purpose. That a simple letter T word could change my life. Yes, I would be a tailor in the city for a few years, until I turned 15, then I would come back and get caught. Then in my husband’s house I could continue making clothes for villagers,

surely, even mother would agree with that plan. I was so excited I turned to Anyango grabbed her by the shoulders and shook her all the while laughing. I broke into a song and dance, only stopping when father walked in on me.

“So, you have already heard” father said smiling at us “who is that little bird who whispered to you the news? It must be your Aunt Nerea, but I would have sworn Otieno said she didn’t know. Anyway, it is well, the young man Ndigwa comes from a good family and he’s offered many cows for your hand. He even wants to bring a deposit, to guarantee your betrothal to him.” With that my father left the hut whistling happily as he went, leaving me in confusion, then realization, followed by shock. Anyango looked at me helplessly.

“What is it, who has died, why the long faces?” Mother asked when she walked in a moment later.

“Mother did that young man, who is visiting with Otieno, come to ask for my hand?”

“Has your father already given you the good news?” She started excitedly “Yes indeed, do you know he is a chief’s son, of course you can’t get married now as we are still waiting for you to see your blood but as soon as that happens you will immediately be *caught*, we don’t want him to spot another girl. How thoughtful of Otieno to refer you to him. I will be the chiefs in law, how wonderful.”

I didn’t realize that I had collapsed on the ground, neither did I realize that tears were sprouting from my eyes and I was all too oblivious to the deep low pitiful groan that came from the depths of my bones startling both my mother and Anyango. I was only aware of the strange sharp pain on my left breast and how every heart beat seem to be accompanied by the crushing of my spirit. I felt my head pounding, how every breathe I took seemed to sink me into oblivion and the agony I felt was unexplainable. Then everything seemed dark and still.

I must have passed out because when I came to I was lying on the mat under the chwa tree.

“It’s a bad omen, someone is trying to steal her luck, there is a bad spirit which is against this union but my charms are going to ward off all the evil around her.” The medicine man had been summoned and four pair of eyes was looking down at me.

“Ouch” I winced as I felt a deep stinging burn as the medicine man made cuts on my arm and rubbed his charms on me. He proceeded to rattle his gourds, made frightening gesticulations, chanted then left. He ordered my family to let me recover.

I turned on my side and felt a sharp pain on my abdomen; the charms were working faster than I thought. I pondered on how my life had changed in an instant, how both good news and bad news had met and collided in my person leaving me torn, again. How in a moment I had felt so alive, how I had almost touched, tasted and smelt freedom and then all of a sudden, dead. The pain in my abdomen continued even as I felt wetness between my thighs.

“Grandmother” I called softly, my voice half strangled by the crying, knowing she was right outside the hut.

“What is it child? Is everything okay?”

“My blood has come.” I responded. I was now a mature woman.

Later in the afternoon, Anyango and Nerea came to bid me goodbye, they were going back to their village.

“Oh Adala, I’m so happy for you, it surely is good news don’t you think, that you saw your blood on the day your hand was asked and now you will be *caught* soon and Ndigwa comes from a very good family and we will be neighbors in the village. You will like it, I promise you.” Nerea Gushed.

“Adala”, Anyango whispered, kneeling close to my mat. “If you want to go the city, I can help you. Your school teacher, Miss Kitchie, is my friend, you just have to tell her when and we will organize everything, okay?”

I nodded in agreement.

That evening there was a flurry of activities, the women came to celebrate my initiation into womanhood: My ears were pierced and

my back was tattooed, I was dressed in armlets and bands on my wrists. The celebration turning a notch higher when my mother announced my betrothal, I on the hand was oblivious to the going ons around me. My mind was frozen; everything I did was mechanical. It was a good thing everyone thought I was overwhelmed with the good news. I was glad for their ignorance.

It had been 7 days since my betrothal, I had dropped out of school much to the delight of my mother who now made me do twice the amount of housework as last minute training before I went to my husband's house. Grandmother's lessons were now more sexual and thinking even of them embarrassed me. Miss Kitche had come to see but mother had chased her away.

That evening, as I was grinding corn in the granary, I had heard my great Aunt Uyoma whispering to my grandmother that I would be *caught* the next morning and telling her that the grooms' men had already arrived in the village.

This was my chance to run to Miss Kitche, and go to the city, I reckoned. I weighed the plan once more in my head.

Lying on my mat that night in grandmother's hut I thought of the decision I had made, would I regret it? Would I look back at this moment and congratulate myself or will I hate myself? Only time would tell.

I woke up with the first cock crow that morning; I didn't rouse from the bed though. I looked back at the past 13 years of my life, the most beautiful moment of my life had been when I was seven years, when the men at the mission house had a celebration called Christmas, and they taught us a nice song, the father had said I had the most beautiful voice, then made me sing by myself that Sunday in front of the entire village. He had given me lots of sweets afterwards. The worst moment of my life had been when my father walked in on my good news and gave me bad news in return. That was my life, I couldn't complain, I had had a good life, yes?

“Adala”, grandmother called me from her mat. “Aren’t you going to get up and go make breakfast?” she asked. Her real worry being that I was keeping the young men who were outside waiting to catch me.

I had decided to be a coward; I had decided to keep the traditions of my people, to be a good model wife and bear children to further our generation, to make my husband and his people happy until my dying day. I had given up my dream of becoming a tailor, a dream that had been like a stillborn child, alive and well in its mother’s womb, only to come out dead, even before the tobacco was puffed into its nose, a dream that had surfaced to mock me. But in staying to get married I had defied tradition, and that gave me something to smile about. Because as much as no one would ever know about this, I had chosen, out of my own will, voluntarily to stay and be *caught* though I could have escaped.

“Adala” grandmother called again. “Get up you lazy girl”.

I roused from the mat, looking at grandmother’s hut for the last time. Knowing it would be a long time before I returned, then slowly went past her, stopping to kiss her lightly on the cheek. I would miss her a lot. I prayed that I would still find her alive when I came back. I opened the door, closed it softly behind me ignoring my grandmothers stifled cry. I walked slowly to the cooking hut, already feeling the hairs on the back of my neck stand. They were here; I readied myself to be caught.

Cuando Todo se Nada

Santiago J. Alonso

al pueblo mapuche

‘Discípulo’ se acercó a ‘Maestro’ y preguntó: - mi hermano ha muerto ¿por qué? Y ‘Maestro’ respondió: - el sol se pone cada atardecer y las mariposas vuelan un solo día – y luego calló.

Su rostro maduro fue bordado por el viento y la frescura del aire. El pelo del color de los piñones se aferraba a sus raíces con fuerza sobrehumana. Emanaban nervios desde sus profundidades más férreas. Vivía en el corazón del ‘Bosque azafrán’, conviviendo con el choique, el filú y Lafquén Trilque. Comía el alimento de los días y bebía la música de las aves de cien voces. Se abrazaba a su natural entorno y estiraba el alma, como lo hace el arco en las manos del bello Caupolicán. El altar mantenía siempre su llama viva y la lluvia hablaba mil lenguas que sólo él podía descifrar. El hombre, cuando está solo, habla con los dioses.

‘Discípulo’ se acercó una mañana repleta de estrellas muertas y furiosas tempestades, y preguntó a ‘Maestro’: - mi padre ha muerto ¿qué es la muerte? Y ‘Maestro’ habló: - amo demasiado la vida para temer a la muerte – le ofreció una manzana y luego calló.

Con el corazón en el rostro, ‘Discípulo’ se alejó ensimismado. Tenía los ojos color canela, como las aves solitarias. Vivía en ‘La aldea del adiós’ y sonreía, cuando el sol salía en el Oriente. Danzaba y abrazaba a su perro, pintaba grandes murales, donde se mostraban las hazañas de Calfucura. La peste alejaba a sus hermanos y la oscuridad ahora era una.

‘Discípulo’ se acercó una tarde, cuando el cielo estaba rojo y las sombras no se dejaban ver ya. Caminó el largo camino y se consumió en el fondo del ‘Bosque azafrán’. Miró a ‘Maestro’, que estaba recostado y contemplaba el vuelo del cóndor, su hermano de sangre, -¡hasta él, el volador solitario, necesita del calor de la carne, de la sangre, de la piel! ‘Discípulo’ preguntó en forma sublime: - mi madre ha muerto ¿qué es la vida? Y ‘Maestro’ contestó: - no creo que nunca llegues. Asombrado, ‘Discípulo’ volvió a preguntar: - ¿Adónde ‘Maestro’? Entonces, ‘Maestro’ habló, antes de retirarse por vez postrera: - al origen.

Glosario

Piñón: fruto del pehuén (araucaria).

Choique: ñandú.

Filú: culebra.

Lafquén Trilque: ser mitológico que adquiere diversas formas.

Caupolicán (piedra pulida y dura como el pedernal) y Calfucura (piedra azul): grandes loncos (caciques) que lucharon contra el invasor español, chileno o argentino, dando su vida por la libertad de su pueblo.

EXPEDICIONES AL NÚCLEO DE LA ZOOLOGÍA MODERNA

Ricardo Elías

«**L**a selva es un lugar misterioso, el lugar donde todo converge, donde hasta lo más increíble puede suceder», escribió sir Thomas Covelpot en su diario de viajes. Uno de los cientos que llenó a lo largo de sus recorridos por los sitios más inhóspitos del mundo.

En 1915 sir Thomas se autodenominaba jefe explorador. Casi todos los integrantes de su equipo lo acompañaban desde hace 10 años. Pocos fueron los que emprendieron rumbos distintos o se alejaron del trabajo en terreno para continuar deshilvanando la zoología desde sus escritorios. Sólo un miembro fue despedido: Pedro Colina, el políglota, cuyo trabajo consistía en oficiarse de intérprete. Además de castellano, inglés, francés y alemán, Colina se manejaba en zulú, tswana, guaraní, bamba y bambara, o por lo menos eso aseguraba. Un día en que visitaban el Alto Paraná, el paraguayo Beni Salmerón, antiguo colega de sir Thomas, lo tomó del brazo, lo apartó y le dijo: amigo, ese tal Colina no sabe hablar guaraní. El jefe explorador no podía creer lo que escuchaba. Y no podía creerlo porque él mismo había sido testigo de cómo ambos, paraguayo e intérprete, hablaron durante más de media hora.

-Pero Thomas –respondió Salmerón–, estuve haciéndole un sinfín de preguntas sobre su familia y su país. Lo único que este tipo contestó una y otra vez fue: hola, gracias, bienvenido, hasta pronto.

A sir Thomas la revelación no dejó de hacerle sentido, sobre todo al recordar aquella incursión en el Congo Belga dos años atrás. El mismo Pedro Colina fue quien gestionó el ingreso a la Reserva ecológica. Una vez al interior, varios jeep con guardias armados les

rodearon. Un tipo enorme saltó desde uno de los vehículos y, apuntando al intérprete con una escopeta, comenzó a gritarle varias frases. Qué es lo que dice, preguntó aterrado todo el resto. Dice que nos da la bienvenida y que quiere cerciorarse de que no nos falta nada, respondió Colina tiritando de pies a cabeza.

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La avioneta tocó tierra a las 18 horas. Sir Thomas Covelpot y un equipo de tres profesionales conformado por un técnico audiovisual, un antropólogo y una destacada ambientalista, descendieron de la nave. Todos vestían el característico traje de explorador color beige de esos años, cinturón ancho y sombrero salacot. Sobre el cuello llevaban una pañoleta roja que, entre otras cosas, servía como distintivo del grupo. Varios años más tarde un investigador marino de origen francés plagiaría esta idea, pero en versión gorro de lana.

El profesor Aristófanes Rensfield, miembro fundador de la Organización Internacional de Zoología y otras ciencias, invitó a todo el equipo a una recepción oficial. Era la segunda vez que sir Thomas visitaba América del Sur.

-Para nuestra casa de estudios es un verdadero orgullo contar con la visita de un personero tan ilustre en las ciencias naturales. La historia del siglo XX recordará dos nombres revolucionarios en estas materias: Charles Darwin y sir Thomas Covelpot.

Durante el cóctel, Rensfield vertió un poco de champaña en la copa de sir Thomas:

-Tengo entendido que su estudio se centrará en dos tipos de primates: el *Callicebus Pallescens* y el *Callicebus Donacophilus*.

-Sobre todo el *Callicebus Pallescens* –respondió sir Thomas–, sus registros todavía son muy escasos.

-Quisiera hacerle una sugerencia, si usted me lo permite.

-Profesor Rensfield. Sus sugerencias, sin duda, enriquecerán nuestra investigación.

-Existe una comunidad de primates que aún no ha sido clasificada. No hay mucha información al respecto pero al parecer se trataría de un grupo muy particular de simios. Aunque no es mi labor entrometerme, sugiero que la expedición comience por esa zona. Usted será quien decida.

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A las 8 de la mañana, el equipo de investigación encabezado por sir Thomas Covelpot y el profesor Aristófanes Rensfield surcó el camino principal de la selva en una carreta tirada por caballos. Una vez que el camino se estrechó lo suficiente como para impedir que la carreta continuara, el grupo bajó y prosiguió a pie, abriéndose paso a través de la espesura. La caminata hasta el campamento duró varias horas. Sir Thomas, con 60 años de edad, mantenía un vigor envidiable. Subía cerros cargando mochilas y equipos, atravesaba ríos con el agua hasta el pecho a un ritmo implacable. Para mantener su buena salud, sir Thomas pocas veces trasnochaba. Bebía muy poco y nunca había probado un cigarrillo.

Esa noche, Claude, el antropólogo del equipo, conoció a su colega Guillaume, mano derecha de Aristófanes Rensfield. Un antropólogo adicional podría haber propiciado una discordia de competencias intelectuales. Sin embargo ambos hicieron buenas migas casi de inmediato. Hablaron durante horas sobre la comparación evolutiva entre el gorila común, el gorila de montaña y el ñandú magallánico.

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La caminata se reanudó a la mañana. Sir Thomas sacó su pañoleta roja del bolsillo y se la amarró en la cabeza. Pidió a todos hacer lo mismo, para poder facilitar la ubicación visual de cada uno en el intenso verde de la selva. A medio día el equipo se reunió con Taru,

indígena de una tribu cercana que oficiaría de guía de la expedición. Sus conocimientos fueron claves para entender el lenguaje de la naturaleza.

Sin previo aviso, Taru les hizo desviarse de la ruta original. Los condujo hacia el valle de los simios que el profesor Rensfield había sugerido.

«El profesor Rensfield es una persona de generosidad inestimable pero también se trata de alguien muy obstinado. ¡La investigación que en un inicio iba a comenzar en la comunidad del Callicebus Pallescens comenzó finalmente por la región donde vive el simio que Rensfield insistió que teníamos que conocer!»

Se estableció un descanso. Una parte del equipo organizaría la merienda. Sir Thomas, Taru y Rensfield se internaron un kilómetro por entre la densa vegetación en dirección norte. Taru ordenó parar en una colina profusa de árboles de baja altura. Desde allí podía verse todo el valle y los dos riachuelos que lo circundaban. Un tono especial en el color de la vegetación de la zona parecía delimitarla, un verde pálido, medio amarillo. Comenzaba en el centro y se extendía hasta los bordes, un poco más allá de ambos ríos. Los tres hombres descendieron por la colina en dirección a un claro. Allí se detuvieron.

Sir Thomas divisó a un grupo no muy numeroso de simios en la entrada de lo que parecía ser un cubil fabricado con ramas. Llamó su atención el hecho de que este se hallara en el suelo, sobre unos leños, y no sobre un árbol, que era lo usual en las razas estudiadas. «Interesante» fue la primera palabra que pronunció sir Thomas estando allí. El tamaño de los monos no distaba mucho de la de sus pares en la región. Con asombro pudo constatar que el pelaje de la mayoría de ellos era jaspeado, similar al de un felino Panterino: el leopardo.

-Es cuero —explicó Rensfield-. Estos monos usan el cuero de otros animales como vestimenta.

-De los leopardos –dijo sir Thomas al notar las manchas sobre el pelaje.

-No, jaguares –corrigió Rensfield-. En esta región no hay leopardos, hay jaguares.

-Interesante –volvió a comentar sir Thomas llevándose ahora una mano a la barbilla.

En todos sus años de naturalista nunca vio algo similar. Comprendió que el grupo de primates que estaba observando era mucho más atractivo que el *Callicebus Pallescens* a quienes, aunque aún faltaban datos por recopilar, varios investigadores les seguían la pista.

-No se diga más, profesor Rensfield. Estableceremos el campamento aquí -ordenó, regresando al punto de descanso.

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Taru narró, a la luz de la fogata, ciertas particularidades de los simios del valle, a quienes los indígenas de la zona llamaban Aoaku. Se alimentaban de los frutos caídos a los pies de los árboles, nunca subían a tomarlos directamente de las ramas. Pero lo más llamativo era su sistema social. Taru, que al igual que los demás miembros de su tribu, había convivido con los Aoaku toda la vida, describió su comportamiento: se organizaban en grupos o familias y estas en comunidades. Día a día los miembros de las comunidades se encargaban de recoger los frutos caídos, casi todos reventados o medios podridos. Esta fruta era depositada en grandes almacenes custodiados por la familia principal: un grupo de simios sedentarios que no hacía otra cosa que recibir y administrar lo recolectado. Por cada montón de fruta entregada, los recolectores eran premiados con una. Este acto, que podía ser leído como un intento de preservación de los recursos naturales, representaba un consumo alimenticio muy bajo y hacía que entre los simios se propagaran enfermedades relacionadas con la desnutrición. Las pieles era otro tema llamativo. De encontrar un animal muerto, el mono le sacaba el cuero, lo

limpiaba y se lo llevaba a la familia principal. Sir Thomas no tardó en denominar a esta familia como *grupo alpha*. El *grupo alpha* funcionaba como un banco. Cada pedazo de cuero era pagado con varias frutas. Los cueros posteriormente eran teñidos de amarillo con manchas negras, los colores del jaguar, y se transformaban en su vestimenta. Pasado un tiempo, el *grupo alpha* seleccionaba a alguno de los monos recolectores y lo premiaba con un cuero pintado, aunque de una calidad muy inferior al que ellos llevaban. Los que estaban más rotos, los que parecían harapos.

-Taru ¿por qué estos simios se empeñan en darle todo su trabajo de recolección a esta familia principal? –preguntó sir Thomas.

-Siempre lo han hecho así –respondió el indígena.

-¿Y qué reciben a cambio?

Una fruta.

-Pero si la fruta la recolectan ellos mismos –dijo sir Thomas.

Taru se encogió de hombros y continuó removiendo las brasas con una larga rama de caucho.

-¿Y qué tienen que ver estos monos con el jaguar? –prosiguió sir Thomas-, ¿hay muchos jaguares por la zona?

-Ya no –explicó Taru-. El clima y la desaparición de los animales que le servían de alimento hicieron que el jaguar emigrara hacia el este, hace ya muchos años.

-¿Pero alguna vez anduvo por aquí?

-Sí, de hecho fue un depredador voraz con los Aoaku. Casi los extermina.

-El tema de los cueros es muy raro –comentó Aristófanes Rensfield-. Pareciera que llevaran un abrigo, aunque el clima aquí es caluroso todo el año. Cargar con esas pieles todo el día no debe ser cómodo.

-Probablemente sea un elemento de cortejo –elucubró sir Thomas.

Todos escucharon atentamente la conversación, por lo menos hasta que los hambrientos mosquitos de la selva así lo permitieron.

Sir Thomas Covelpot se la pasaba observando a los Aoaku desde la madrugada hasta que anocheceía. El sol a ratos pegaba fuerte. El jefe explorador bebía agua de la cantimplora, secaba el sudor de su rostro y continuaba. A su lado, el muchacho audiovisual lo registraba todo con su cámara de cine. A sir Thomas le intrigaban muchísimos aspectos de la organización social en este tipo de primates. Notaba el comportamiento de los que eran premiados con pieles. Parecía ser el máximo reconocimiento. Inmediatamente se alejaban de la familia original, los correteaban de su lado. Pasaban a identificarse con el grupo *alpha*. Pero el grupo *alpha* los correteaba a ellos. Estos monos terminaban, entonces, conformando islas. Se dedicaban a orbitar a los *alpha*, a seguirlos a donde fueran, a imitar sus movimientos, a intentar entrar en su núcleo.

“El cuero opera como un distintivo social. Es una extraña forma de clasismo en monos. Algo que nunca antes vi. Ni en los primates de la península de Yucatán, ni en el África más profunda”.

Una tarde Lily se percató de lo siguiente: los monos parecían desplazarse todo el tiempo en cuatro patas, nunca en dos. Se movían por entre la vegetación contorsionando su cuerpo como un felino agazapado listo para el ataque. Pasaban sus pequeñas lenguas por sus brazos, luego frotaban su cabeza. Al disputarse la comida daban arañazos. Incluso rugían.

Durante la cena, Lily expuso sus notas. Ambos antropólogos intentaron desacreditarla con frases sarcásticas. Pero sir Thomas y el profesor Rensfield escucharon con atención. Taru parecía mostrarse muy de acuerdo con lo narrado por la ambientalista.

“Los Aoaku imitan al jaguar. No sólo se visten con pieles que recuerdan el pelaje del jaguar sino que copian su comportamiento”

-Pero el jaguar –preguntó Rensfield-, ¿no es que casi acaba con estos simios? Si era su depredador número 1 ¿Por qué entonces buscan ser como el jaguar?...

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El estudio de estos primates hacía surgir cada día más preguntas. Sir Thomas estaba maravillado.

“El profesor Rensfield ha demostrado una vez más ser un académico extraordinario, un profesional de esos que ya casi no quedan. El tipo de científico que la ciencia necesita para poder avanzar”

Los dos antropólogos, viéndose desplazados por la aguda capacidad de observación de la ambientalista, se la pasaron todo el día siguiente a pleno sol estudiando a los simios en su entorno. Sir Thomas y Lily, por su parte, observaron las tareas de recolección. Les parecía absurdo ver cómo los monos recogían las frutas podridas del suelo. Luego miraban hacia las alturas con melancolía, añorando el momento en que una de ellas se soltara y cayera, antes que el sol la apachurrara. Taru observaba en silencio. A ratos daba la impresión de que tuviera respuesta a todas las interrogantes pero no quisiera interrumpir en el método de estudio.

Una mañana bastante más fría que las anteriores, sir Thomas se percató de la existencia de unos individuos distintos al interior de la comunidad. Un puñado de monos que parecían no seguir los mismos preceptos que caracterizaban al resto de los Aoaku. Sus pieles lucían descoloridas y largas, muy largas. Tan largas que incluso las arrastraban al caminar.

Cerca de las 8 de la noche, el jefe explorador le pidió a los antropólogos que hicieran la cena para despedir a Taru. Ambos obedecieron de mala gana. Guillaume coció unas papas, Claude improvisó una anaconda al pil-pil. Grandes abrazos y frases de agradecimiento coronaron la partida de quien fuera el guía local. Más tarde el profesor Rensfield, sir Thomas y Lily se batieron en un debate científico de alto vuelo sobre zoología evolutiva. Una parte de la conversación fue registrada por la cámara de cine. Años después esa película sería material de estudio en numerosas universidades.

-Pienso que la imitación que hacen del jaguar responde a un sistema de defensa –elucubró Rensfield-. Para confundir, para evitar un ataque de parte del jaguar.

-Eso podría tener sentido si es que el jaguar siguiera viviendo en la región –comentó Lily-, pero hace ya varios años que emigró de aquí. Taru lo dijo.

El largo de las pieles en el grupo de los monos descubierto por sir Thomas también fue objeto de discusión:

-En la naturaleza encontramos casos en que el macho posee atributos físicos de mayor tamaño. Baste revisar los cuernos del *Alce americanus*. Quizás estemos frente a un grupo de simios macho que utilizan el largo de sus pieles como elemento de cortejo.

-Difiero –dijo Lily-. Durante la tarde pude constatar la existencia de machos y hembras al interior del grupo de los *pieles largas*.

Sir Thomas escuchó atento. Guillaume y Claude se echaron una mirada furibunda. Uno de ellos tiró con rabia el bol sobre la mesa con el postre que le habían exigido preparar.

-¿Podría ser un signo de vejez, Lily? –preguntó Rensfield.

“En la observación detenida, dimos cuenta de un subgrupo de simios: los pieles largas. De alguna forma estos individuos se desmarcan del resto de la comunidad. Posiblemente el profesor Rensfield tenga razón y se trate de algo así como un consejo de ancianos.”

Al día siguiente, cerca de la hora del crepúsculo, sir Thomas, fundido entre la vegetación, siguió a uno de los *pieles largas* en su recorrido por la selva. Arrastrando su abrigo, el mono llegó hasta el lugar donde se hallaba el *grupo alpha*. Lejos de ocurrir lo que sir Thomas esperó presenciar, estos lo correataron violentamente. Pasó lo mismo con todos los grupos con los que se cruzó. Le tironeaban el excedente de cuero, le frenaban el paso, lo apartaban a golpes.

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Tras un acucioso examen a la flora nativa, Lily descubrió una bacteria que se devoraba el cloroplasto de las células vegetales. Aquello podía ser una respuesta frente a la interrogante de la decoloración de la flora en la zona. No sólo la decoloraba, también la debilitaba y hacía que los animales herbívoros no obtuvieran de las plantas los nutrientes necesarios. La falta de ese elemento estaba acabando con la fauna del valle. Lily se acercó a sir Thomas para narrarle el hallazgo. El naturalista vertía una cucharadita de canela sobre su chocolate caliente.

-Y esa bacteria ¿de dónde proviene? –preguntó sir Thomas-. ¿Podrían contagiarla los *pieles largas*?

-¿A qué se refiere?

-Los *pieles largas* son apartados por los demás monos de la comunidad, como si estuvieran enfermos. Tal vez ellos son los que contagian la bacteria...

-No, profesor –respondió Lily-. La bacteria brota de la podredumbre de la fruta.

“Una de las costumbres de estos monos (acaso la más extraña) era el amontonamiento, en enormes cantidades, de frutos que no iban a consumir y que terminaban por pudrirse. La putrefacción sumado a la acidez propia de la fruta genera gases tóxicos y la proliferación de una bacteria que altera el ecosistema”

La tarde del jueves 3 de marzo, sir Thomas Covelpot y el profesor Rensfield dieron un largo paseo por toda la zona. En un punto de observación, siguiendo a un grupo de simios, Rensfield se dio cuenta de que los llamados *pieles largas* se articulaban en una comunidad aparte. Vivían en conjunto, compartían su alimento y eran extremadamente creativos: ideaban herramientas con fines prácticos.

Rensfield fue testigo de cómo lograban trasladar agua desde el río usando un interesante sistema de cocos ahuecados amarrados a unas lianas. Notó además que ellos sí mostraban un desarrollo antropológico coherente con el tipo de primate. Construían sus guaridas en los árboles y se relacionaban entre ellos de una manera adecuada. Sólo se comportaban de esta forma, sin embargo, cuando estaban lejos de la comunidad principal. Verlos en su estado salvaje era algo así como un privilegio: limpiando ramas para construir sus casas, juntando agua en unas especies de tanques hechos a partir de una resina. Rensfield observó un evento que lo llenó de sorpresa: estos simios sí intentaban sacar los frutos frescos de arriba de los árboles. Habían creado una especie de escalera rudimentaria por las que subían hasta alcanzar la cima. Tres monos escalaron el armatoste en ese momento. El profesor Rensfield no cejaba de tomar nota de lo que estaba presenciando cuando, por entre los árboles, apareció un grupo de *pieles jaspeadas*. Fueron apareciendo lento, caminando a ras de piso. El color de sus pelajes se confundía con la vegetación. Rodearon a los monos sobre la escalera y elevaron sus garras para cogerles del cuero, para que estos no pudieran alcanzar los frutos que pendían de lo alto. Entre todos tiraban de sus abrigo de piel. Arriba los monos oponían resistencia. Algunos cueros se rasgaron. La chilladera no se detuvo hasta que los tres aterrizaron de porrazo en el suelo. Allí los terminaron de machacar. Luego echaron abajo la estructura erigida.

Los intrusos se retiraron del lugar caminando como felinos que se regresan a la selva. Los monos malheridos se retorcieron en el barro un buen rato más. Sir Thomas y el profesor Rensfield se miraron con

desconcierto. Ambos permanecieron en el mismo sitio un buen rato más, inmóviles, intentando entender lo recién presenciado.

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Esa noche, la cena en el campamento alrededor de la fogata estuvo marcada por un sentimiento de profunda decepción. Lo que al principio del estudio se señalaba como el descubrimiento de una raza de simios evolutivamente superior, esa noche se desparramaba por el borde de un despeñadero. Los jóvenes antropólogos dejaron de lado el arroz con toques de hierbas aromáticas que estaban cocinando. Uno de ellos incluso se quitó el delantal. Sir Thomas sirvió vino en los tazones. Sólo así las palabras comenzaron a surgir tímidas por entre los labios bloqueados. Sir Thomas Covelpot se explayó largamente sobre la teoría de la evolución de las especies para abordar ciertas paradojas que se daban en algunos grupos de mamíferos. Sus argumentos estuvieron sustentados en la idea de que aquello que al principio pudiera parecer un sin sentido, podía tener una lógica correlativa en el macro evolutivo. Siempre y cuando –agregó Rensfield-, su fin sea la perpetuación y no el exterminio. Rensfield apoyaba la tesis de que en ciertas ocasiones la selección natural podía desviar su curso y cometer aberraciones que desencadenarían en graves tragedias.

-Sin embargo -añadió sir Thomas-, el hecho de que estemos aquí, presenciando el fenómeno en una comunidad de primates hasta entonces desconocida debe tener un propósito mayor al que nosotros mismos podemos imaginar, por cuanto nosotros formamos parte de esa misma naturaleza que estamos decidiendo no intervenir. Al tal punto que el no intervenir estaría yendo en contra de la responsabilidad que la selección natural nos ha entregado.

-¿Qué sugiere, sir Thomas? –preguntó Rensfield.

El jefe explorador bebió vino de su tazón. Esa sola acción fue la respuesta que el grupo esperaba recibir.

A las 5 de la mañana, los integrantes del equipo de exploración se acercaron a la comunidad de los Aoaku. Las pañoletas rojas que llevaban amarrada a la altura de las fosas nasales para proteger las vías respiratorias les hacía ver como un grupo de cuatreros. La realidad no era muy distinta. Aprovechando que los simios dormían, rodearon sus cubiles, la zona donde guardaban sus víveres y donde fabricaban sus pieles. Llenaron de leños, paja y ramas secas todo el sector. Iniciaron fuego. Guillaume y Claude se encargaron de irrumpir en la otra comunidad, la de los *pieles largas*. Gritaron y golpearon con palos los árboles alrededor. Los simios emergieron de sus escondites. Ambos antropólogos destruyeron a punta de garrote todo lo construido conminándolos a huir. Fue una estampida. Los monos escaparon horrorizados a través del río para entonces perderse en lo profundo de la espesura del otro lado y de allí hasta los confines de la selva.

Los *pieles jaspeadas* tuvieron menos suerte. Cuando despertaron, el fuego ya se había propagado. Aunque intentaron huir, pocos lo consiguieron. Las llamas calcinaron toda la zona varios kilómetros a la redonda. Fue una matanza indiscriminada, de eso no cabe duda. El humo cubrió hasta las montañas más altas alrededor.

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30 años después de la muerte de sir Thomas Covelpot, la editorial inglesa J.M. Publishers publicó sus estudios bajo el título *Expediciones al núcleo de la zoología moderna* en tres volúmenes. La historia del incendio en la selva fue narrada, a modo de anécdota, en las memorias del antropólogo Claude François: *Sir Thomas Covelpot, un hombre fuera de serie*. A excepción de esas memorias no existe otro documento que recoja el hecho. Claude publicó sus memorias a la edad de 70 años, movido por el mero interés monetario, aseguran algunos. En el capítulo 25 de su libro, Claude aclara cómo se originó

la idea de acabar con la comunidad de monos Aoaku, que habían degenerado en meros “parásitos devastadores del entorno natural”: *Investigadores de todo el mundo afirmaron en su momento que aquel acontecimiento contuvo la expansión de una potente bacteria que, de otra manera, habría terminado propagándose por toda la selva, exterminando a una importante cantidad de animales y plantas.*

Movidos por la leyenda, durante muchísimo tiempo varias expediciones intentaron dar con los Aoaku sin resultados concretos. En 1980 el naturalista Antonio Ferguera recorrió durante varios meses la zona en que sir Thomas centró su investigación. Del incendio ocurrido hace más de 70 años ya no quedaban rastros en la selva. Tampoco de los supuestos simios.

Una mañana mientras caminaban de vuelta a través de la profusa vegetación, Antonio Ferguera se detuvo. Divisó hacia el valle lo que parecía ser un numeroso grupo de personas estableciendo un campamento. Lo que más llamó su atención es que parecían exploradores, pero exploradores de principio de siglo, por el color de sus vestimentas. Iban uniformados, llevaban chaquetas, cinturón y sombreros salacot. Ferguera bajó los binoculares. El equipo descendió en dirección al valle. Al llegar abajo y ver de cerca, Antonio Ferguera no tardó en comprender que se trataba de un efecto visual producido por la distancia. No eran personas sino una comunidad de simios. Simios que iban vestidos. Lo que parecían ser chaquetas y pantalones color beige no eran más que trozos de cuero pintados, y los sombreros salacot eran en realidad cocos partidos por la mitad. Sus cubiles, puestos en el suelo, asemejaban una carpa estilo canadiense. Como las de principio de siglo, otra vez.

-¡Son los Aoaku! -gritó Ferguera, con una sonrisa que encandiló a todo el equipo.

Confiamos ciegamente en las coordenadas dejadas por el jefe explorador en sus diarios de viaje. Luego de varios días viviendo inmersos en las hostilidades de

la selva, divisamos una comunidad de simios con pieles sobre sus pieles, aunque distintas a las descritas. No se asemejaban al pelaje del jaguar. Al mirarlos de reojo estos monos más parecían ir vestidos como las imágenes que hay de los exploradores de 1900. ¡Son en extremo amistosos con el ser humano! Nos colmaron de frutas, de obsequios, nos trataron como si fuéramos visitas ilustres o quizás deidades. Lo que nos hizo más gracia fueron las telas y cueros de color rojo con que cubrían sus hocicos, los hacía ver como pequeños bandoleros. De hecho les pusimos así, los bandoleros. No cabíamos de fascinación. Abí, en ese valle, pudimos palpar en carne propia la trascendencia de los estudios realizados por sir Thomas Covelpot, sin duda el naturalista más relevante del siglo XX.

Poetry

Josué ha muerto (19/10/2012)²

Aarón Hernán Flores Suárez

*Pero aunque casi todo es mentira
sé que algún día Chile entero
se levantará sólo para verte
y aunque nada exista,
mis ojos te verán*
RAÚL ZURITA

Josué ha muerto.

Josué Betancourt ha muerto.

A Josué Betancourt lo atravesó una bala.

A Josué Betancourt una bala lo atravesó por debajo del pecho.

Nueve años de vida no son suficientes y
la eternidad de la muerte no se la merece.

La vida entera en un escriño fangoso
—pequeño y oscuro—no es suficiente.

La muerte sin fin y debajo
de una lápida no se la merece.

¿Qué pasará si su alma de niño crece?

¿Qué pasará si su alma pequeña se convierte en la de un gigante?

¿Qué pasará si su alma hace pedazos su pequeño cajón-corazón de
madera?

¿Qué pasará si su alma de niño gigante quiere salir a jugar *soccer* o a
jugar a las

²Para contextualizar al lector y, así, lograr una mejor comprensión del siguiente poema —escrito *in situ*—, el autorrecomienda complementar su lectura con los siguientes enlaces:

- (1) <http://www.losangelespress.org/panama-48-horas-en-huelga-en-medio-de-violencia-policia/>
- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6P09KXUdFQ>

[muñecas?

Hoy, Panamá no está lejos ni cerca,
hoy, el istmo panameño está ausente.
Hoy, Panamá es una pared acribillada,
hoy, el istmo panameño es un muro marcado con boquetes.

En Colón ha muerto un niño.

A Colón se le escapó

un poeta,
un minero,
un pescador,
un lancharo,
un mojado,
un camello,
un futbolista,
un ladrón,
un asesino,
un policía o
un presidente.

Su muerte da tumbos,
tropieza, torpemente,
dentro de un pequeño

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que pasea en hombros
de la multitud, por los
alrededores de la Iglesia de Dios,
como un barquito de papel que cruza
el Pacífico, desafiando todas las mareas.

Su muerte es ingenua
y, de tal manera,
se abre paso como
una *chiva parrandera*³
que avanza a toda velocidad
—sin reparar en los semáforos—,
atropellando la historia a más de 120 km/h.
Así, su muerte avanza como un *diablo rojo*⁴

³“En Panamá las chivas son buses rurales que cubren rutas desde y hacia la Ciudad de Panamá y las principales localidades del interior del país. Como transporte urbano fueron reemplazadas en los años 70 por los «diablos rojos». Actualmente su uso se limita al transporte rural y a paseos turísticos por la ciudad, siendo muy populares las «chivas parranderas»”, Chiva (vehículo). (s.f.). En *Wikipedia*. Recuperado el jueves 31 de mayo de 2018 de: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiva_\(veh%C3%ADculo\)](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chiva_(veh%C3%ADculo))

⁴“Dentro del área urbana, los pasajeros eran transportados en autobuses multicolores conocidos popularmente como *diablos rojos*. Estos buses cubren un área bastante extensa de la ciudad y zonas aledañas, están decorados con colores brillantes, a menudo representando a artistas, políticos y otras personalidades famosas en el ámbito popular. Desde el 15 de marzo de 2013, el sistema de transporte público MetroBus sustituyó al diablo rojo. El pasaje en las rutas regulares y transversales cuesta 25 centésimos, y las de autopista y corredor (que van del centro

por Calle 6, entre las avenidas Central y Meléndez,
mientras arroja un humo negro e intransigente.

Martinelli lo ha asesinado.
Ricardo Martinelli lo ha asesinado.
A Ricardo Martinelli le costó una bala.
A Ricardo Alberto Martinelli una bala le costó hacerle un hoyo justo -----
----- por debajo -----
|
----- del pecho
V
Ø

Tres años de mandato y se suman más muertos;
dos años más le restan y parece no haber quién lo detenga...

No obstante, Josué, hoy, 26 de octubre de 2012,
es el viernes de la semana más lúgubre de este año cualquiera.
Son las 2 p.m. y una multitud se levantó
—toda vestida de blanco— con el único propósito de verte.

Laturba entera—como
un gran puño de piedra—
te sujeta entre sus manos, como
a un niño santo dentro de un arca, dentro
de un pequeño y triste cajón-corazón de madera.

Así, lentamente, la multitud te dice adiós y su aplauso se levanta
como una alabanza,
como cometa.

al norte o del centro al este) cuestan 75 centésimos”, Panamá (ciudad).
(s.f.). En *Wikipedia*. Recuperado el jueves 31 de mayo de 2018
de: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panam%C3%A1_\(ciudad\)#Autobuses](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panam%C3%A1_(ciudad)#Autobuses).

Y tú nos dices adiós con una mano rota que,
apenas se levanta y, súbitamente, ondea
como la candela intermitente de una vela.

Tú nos dices adiós
y veo como tus entrañas
se desparraman en la fosa.

Tú nos dices adiós
y tus entrañas se extienden,
como raíces, para reinsertarte en la tierra.

* **NOTA ACLARATORIA.** Si las notas 2 y 3, incluidas a pie de página, resultan prescindibles a ojos de los editores, éstos pueden sentirse libres de retirarlas –o, en su defecto, reemplazarlas por referencias más adecuadas, en caso de que cuenten con ellas.

Josué has died (Oct/19/2012)⁵

Aarón Hernán Flores Suárez

Translated from Spanish by Don Cellini

*Even though almost everything is a lie
I know that one day all of Chile
will rise up just to see you
and though nothing will exist
I will see you*
RAÚL ZURITA

Joshua is dead.

Joshua Betancourt is dead.

Joshua Betancourt was shot by a bullet.

Joshua Betancourt's chest was pierced by a bullet.

Nine years of life are not enough and
the eternity of death does not deserve him.
All of life in a muddy script
-Small and dark- is not enough.
He does not deserve
endless death and below from a gravestone.

What will happen if your child's soul grows?
What will happen if your small soul becomes that of a giant?

What will happen if his soul smashes his little wooden-heart crate?
What will happen if your giant child's soul wants to go out to play
soccer or play dolls?

Today, Panama is not far or near,
today, the Panamanian isthmus is absent.
Today, Panama is a riddled wall,

⁵To give the reader some context in order to better understand the poem, the author suggests reading the following links:

- (1) <http://www.losangelespress.org/panama-48-horas-en-huelga-en-medio-de-violencia-policial/>
- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6P09KXUdFQ>

today, the Panamanian isthmus is a wall marked with holes.

In Colón a child has died.
From Colón there has escaped

a poet,
a miner,
a fisherman,
a boatman,
a wetback,
a pusher,
a soccer player,
a thief,
a murderer,
a policeman or
a president.

His death tumbles,
stumbles, awkwardly,
inside a small

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which passes by on the shoulders
of the crowd, around the
vicinity of the Church of God,
like a paper boat that crosses
the Pacific, challenging all the tides.

His death is innocent
and, in such a way,

it breaks through like
a party bus
going at full speed
-Without watching for traffic lights-
hitting history at over 75 miles per hour.
And so his death speeds like a red devil
on Calle 6, between Central and Meléndez Avenues,
while giving off a black and uncompromising smoke.

Martinelli has murdered him.
Ricardo Martinelli has murdered him.
Ricardo Martinelli cost him a bullet.
Ricardo Alberto Martinelli, created a bullet hole just ----- - -
----- below -----

----- | ----- the chest
III
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ø

Three years of the mandate and more deaths are added;
two more years remain and there seems to be no one to stop
him ...

However, Joshua, today, October 26, 2012,
it is the Friday of the gloomiest week of this year, any year.

It is 2 pm. and a crowd got up
-All dressed in white- with the sole purpose of seeing you.

The whole mob
-A great stone fist-
that holds you between their hands, like
a holy child inside an ark, inside
a small and sad, wooden box like a heart.

So, slowly, the crowd says goodbye to you and their applause
rises
like praise,
like a kite.

And you say goodbye with a broken hand that
barely rises and suddenly flutters
like a candle's flickering flame.

You say good-bye to us
and I watch as your entrails
scatter in the pit.

You tell us goodbye
and your bowels extend like roots,
to reintegrate yourself into the earth.

Nelson Mandela

Cristiane Grando

Madiba

título honorífico otorgado por sus ancianos

Mandela

nombre del líder sudafricano

amado en todo el mundo

Poema escrito por Cristiane Grando especialmente para el Festival Mandela. Santo Domingo-República Dominicana: Ministerio de Cultura, Sala Ramón Oviedo, 18 de agosto de 2010.

Nelson Mandela

Cristiane Grando

Translated from Spanish by Don Cellini

Madiba

honorary title awarded by his elders

Mandela

name of the South African leader

loved around the world

This poem was written y Cristiane Grando specifically for the Festival Mandela. Santo Domingo-República Dominicana: Ministerio de Cultura, Sala Ramón Oviedo, August 18, 2010.

Zuzu en el cielo

Cristiane Grando

Zuzu ángel

Zuzu madre

Zuzu asesinada en la *Estrada da Gávea*

imagino Zuzu, angélica, entrando en el cielo
y presentándose a San Pedro:

yo, Zuzu Angel
víctima de la dictadura militar en Brasil
busco a mi hijo

Poema escrito para la obra inédita de Cristiane Grando “Yo, Zuzu Angel, víctima de la dictadura militar en Brasil, busco a mi hijo”, compuesta por telas, botones, bordados, objetos de metal y agujas.

Zuzu in Heaven

Cristiane Grando

Translated from Spanish by Don Cellini

Zuzu angel

Zuzu mother

Zuzu murdered in the Estrada da Gávea

I imagine Zuzu, angelic, entering heaven
and introducing himself to Saint Peter:

I'm Zuzu Angel
victim of the military dictatorship in Brazil
I'm looking for my son

Poem written for the unpublished work by Cristiane Grando "I, Zuzu Angel, victim of the military dictatorship in Brazil, I am looking for my son", composed of fabrics, buttons, embroidery, metal objects and needles.

llanto y canto de la casa

Cristiane Grando

tú eres mi todo: el aire
y el sol, el suelo
donde vivo

húmeda al refrescarme en ti
tibia al querer tu calor para mis pies
leve al plantar semillas

Madre-Tierra si te pido que sin miedo
me acojas en un abrazo

el cielo donde puedo soñar
en ser mujer, *menina*, *chanteuse*

y hablarte en tres idiomas o más
ser oída en cualquier llanto y canto de la casa
María Dolores, Evita, Berta Cáceres

cantar como pajarita
llorar las injusticias
callar cuando el silencio está

aún sin hablar u oír
ajena a todo, al mundo
en el medio del silencio en mí

yo sé de tu presencia eterna
allí bien guardada, adentro
en mí

Poema “llanto y canto de la casa/choro e canto da casa” de Cristiane Grando (Brasil) en “¡Despierta Humanidad! en homenaje a Berta Cáceres”, antología poética que incluye a 71 poetas de América, Caribe y Europa (50 poetas internacionales y 21 hondureños). Puesta en circulación como actividad de la Coordinación Permanente de Partidos Políticos Progresistas de América Latina y del Caribe (COPPPAL). Tegucigalpa-Honduras, Hotel Aurora, 25 de abril del 2017.

Poema “llanto y canto de la casa/choro e canto da casa” de Cristiane Grando, publicado en el dossier “Integración latinoamericana y caribeña: caminos, perspectivas y posibilidades” en revista *Espirales*. I S S N 2 5 9 4 - 9 7 2 1 . Número 1, vol. 1. Foz do Iguaçu-Brasil: Postgrado de Integración Contemporánea de América Latina de la Universidade Federal da Integração Latino-Americana - ICAL-UNILA, diciembre del 2017, <<https://revistaespirales.wixsite.com/espirales/copia-chamadas>>, p.249.

The cry and song of the house

Cristiane Grando

Translated from Spanish by Don Cellini

you are my everything: the air
and the sun, the earth
where I live

humid when refreshed in you
warm when my feet are cold
mild when planting seeds

Mother Earth if I ask you fearlessly
would you welcome me with a hug

the sky where I can dream
to be a woman, lady in waiting, chanteuse

and speak to you in three or more languages
be heard in any cry and song of the house
María Dolores, Evita, Berta Cáceres

sing like a little bird
mourn injustices
be quiet when it's silent

still without speaking or hearing
alien to everything, to the world
in the middle of silence in me

I know of your eternal presence
there well guarded, inside
of myself

The poem "crying and singing of the house / choro e canto da casa" by Cristiane Grando (Brazil) in "¡Despierta Humanidad! in homage to Berta Cáceres " a poetic anthology that includes 71 poets from the Americas, the Caribbean and Europe (50 international poets and 21 Hondurans). Put into circulation as an activity of the Permanent Coordination of Progressive Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPPAL). Tegucigalpa-Honduras, Hotel Aurora, April 25, 2017.

The poem "crying and singing of the house / choro e canto da casa" by Cristiane Grando, published in the dossier "Latin American and Caribbean integration: roads, perspectives and possibilities" in Spirals magazine. ISSN 2594-9721. Number 1, vol. 1. Foz do Iguaçu-Brasil: Postgraduate Course on Contemporary Integration of Latin America of the Federal University of Latin American Integration - ICAL-UNILA, December 2017, <<https://revistaespirales.wixsite.com/espirales/copia-chamadas>> , p.249.

Sister/Mountain

Pippa Little

They are serene, those two,
sitting reconciled
in the gold and blue of evening:
old as the moon and wiser,
they see so that we may see –
far and farther

my mother tells the story
I ask and ask to hear
in that time of dark when the dogs grow silent,
how they were young sisters then,
Kibo the careful one, eking out her food,
Mawenzi wild, spendthrift
and always hungry, begging, begging
so Kibo shared all she had
again and again – how many times?
I'd pester my mother –

though I love them both
as I love my human sisters
secretly it's Mawenzi who has my heart
for her childish wanting, her hard lesson
learned, the ripeness
of her appetite.

From a Chagga folktale about Mount Kilimanjaro – two peaks of which were sisters, one careful, the other careless. Losing patience Kibo hit the other, Mawenzi, with the back of a spoon, explaining her appearance today.

Hermana / Montaña

Pippa Little

Translated from English by Ricardo Felix Rodriguez

Ellas permanecen serenas, ellas dos,
Sentadas, reconciliadas
en el dorado azulino de la tarde:
tan viejo como la luna y un poco más sabio,
ellas ven para que podamos ver -
cada vez más lejos

mi madre cuenta la historia
Pido y vuelvo a pedirle escuchar
en ese momento de oscuridad cuando los perros guardan silencio,
eran hermanas muy jóvenes en aquel entonces,
Kibo el cuidadoso, preparando su comida,
Mawenzi el salvaje, despilfarrando
y siempre hambriento, mendigando, mendigando
así que Kibo compartió todo lo que tenía
una y otra vez, ¿cuántas veces?
Yo había molestado a mi madre -

aunque las amo a ambas
como amo a mis hermanas humanas
en secreto es Mawenzi quien tiene mi corazón
por su deseo infantil, su dura lección
ha aprendido, la madurez
de su apetito

De un cuento popular Chagga sobre el Monte Kilimanjaro, dos montañas hermanas, una cuidadosa, la otra despreocupada. Perdiendo la paciencia, Kibo golpeó a Mawenzi con la parte posterior de una cuchara, explicando su aspecto de boy.

Crone of the Calabash

Pippa Little

A woman has two skins: the inner
one she may never know except in old age.
On the mountain women are talked about
like the calabash : *ripe, unripe.*

A woman once longed for children
who came to her, split open, yellow
as butter, at the moment of their perfect flowering.
Sugarcane is sweetest at the joint, she said,
swallowing the harsh years in one gulp.
She forgot the rigid dance, the dusty heels
that brought her here, at last, to a soft clouded
dominion of herself.

Bruja de calabaza

Pippa Little

Translated from English by Ricardo Felix Rodriguez

Una mujer tiene dos pieles: el interior
que tal vez nunca conozca, excepto en su vejez.
En la montaña se habla de las mujeres
como la calabaza: *madura, verde*.
Una mujer anhelaba niños
quien vino hacia ella, se abrió, amarilla
como la mantequilla, en el momento de su perfecta florescencia.
La caña de azúcar es la más dulce en la coyuntura, dijo ella.
tragándose los años duros de un solo bocado.
Olvidó la danza rígida, los talones polvorientos
que la trajeron aquí, por fin, a un suave dominio nublado
de ella misma

Mami Wata

Pippa Little

You are my secret skin
cool and restless
wash over me,
carry me far from here

I step inside your grace
you whirl me, raise and rest my whole
weary lifetime in a wave,
a flow, you carry me far

no blood remains on me
no memories
I open and you fill with light
every inner part of me

and I dive so deep
become so strong
nothing can drag me back
I am already far away from here

Mami Wata

Pippa Little

Translated from English by Ricardo Felix Rodriguez

Eres mi piel oculta
genial e inquieta
lávame,
llévame lejos de aquí

Entro en tu gracia
me das vueltas, me levantas y descansas
mi vida agotada en una ola,
un flujo, me llevas lejos
no quedan restos de sangre en mi
sin memorias
Abro y te llenas de luz
cada parte dentro de mi

y buceo tan profundo
me vuelvo tan fuerte
nada puede arrastrarme de regreso
Ya estoy lejos de aquí

Descálzate

Jorge Contreras Herrera

Un buen poema puede ser un mal poema para un mal lector,
lo mismo que un mal poema puede parecer un buen poema para un
mal lector.

Cuál es el verdadero poema.

De qué forma se debe calibrar la sensibilidad,

o en qué condición debe estar el alma,

y pienso en el alma que los instrumentos musicales tienen
para que suenen no nada más bien, sino perfecto.

Entre lo bien y lo perfecto, hay un abismo.

Cuántos se quedan a las puertas del templo,

y tengo que explicarlo, pues un mal lector, no me entendería.

Me refiero, cuántos se quedan fuera del poema:

leen algo que no existe.

Lo que existe no está.

Es decir, nuevamente. No todos entran al poema.

El poema, está dentro del poema y dentro de ti.

Si no puedes leerlo, vuelve a intentarlo.

Lee otras cosas, luego regresa.

Hay que entrar descalzo al poema

si no lo haces así, entrarás a otro lado, pero no al poema.

Cuando se revele algo y tu intuición despierte emociones,

imágenes, fuerzas extrañas y algo se ilumine

es señal que el poema te recibe.

Bare Your Feet

Jorge Contreras Herrera

*Translation from it's original Spanish title "Descálzate" by Luz María López
(Puerto Rico)*

A good poem can be an awful poem to an inept reader,
as an awful poem might appear to be a good poem to an inept reader.
Which is the real poem?

In what manner must sensitivity be calibrated,
or in what condition the soul got to be,
and I ponder about the musical soul that instruments embrace
so that they sound not only remarkably good, but rather perfect.
Between good and perfect, there is an abyss.
How many do stay at the doors of the temple,
and I must explain it, because an inept reader, would not understand
me.

I mean, countless are left out of the poem:
read something that does not exist.

What does exist isn't present.

That is, once more. Not everyone can access the poem.

The poem, is within the poem and within yourself.

If you cannot read it, try again.

Read something else, then come back to it.

One must enter barefoot to the poem,
if you don't do it like this, you will enter somewhere else, but not to
the poem.

When something gets revealed and intuition stirs emotions,
images, strange forces and feelings get enlightened,
it is a signal that the poem has received you.

Cuando pienso en ti

Jorge Contreras Herrera

Cuando pienso en ti, estalla una burbuja de colibríes en mi respiración galaxia emplumada de tornasol y sonrisa. Eres toda Babel y cualquier lengua, viva o muerta, habla de tus ojos y de esa intensidad de libélula: férvida mirada en el cáliz de luna creciente. Eres volátil y no pongo en duda tu maestría para caminar sobre el agua. Eres tú quien espolvorea de magia las alas de los ángeles, para volar y volver a las alturas de infinitos cielos. Tú me nutres de magia y por ti es que soy generoso.

Tu piel es más fina que el aliento de una plegaria y tu garbo, portento de dragona de corazón incendiado. Cuando caminas, las piedras se erigen y se rinden ante el polvo de tus pasos. Y si me pusiera a hablar de tu ternura, corro el riesgo de derramarme en suspiros y desaparecer; pero puedo decir que sientes y vives la médula de cada palabra y te estremece el alma, que desde dentro de ti surge una claridad que eriza cada vello de tu cuerpo y los ojos se te endiosan como dos mandalas en donde Shiva y Agni ofician ceremonias y es así que los ritos florecen en sentido.

Y tus labios: mineral fundido se enrojecen en el crisol de una profecía milenaria, es entonces cuando la tierra tiembla sus poemas, y no es otra cosa que el paso que se abren los colibríes de día, para titilar por ti toda la noche.

Eres misteriosa, casi innombrable, pues tu nombre se pronuncia con el corazón limpio, porque al nombrarte, invariablemente surgirán flores espléndidas cargadas de sueños.

Eres una niña de mil eternidades y sabes poner a tus pies al sol y a la luna, no para jugar, sino para cuidarlos. Eres mi templo, mi oriente y occidente, mi norte y sur, mi cenit y nadir. Y todas las lenguas de Babel, vivas y muertas lenguas de Babel, no alcanzan para expresar todo lo que sucede, cuando pienso en ti.

When I think of you

Jorge Contreras Herrera

Translation from its original Spanish title "Cuando pienso en ti" by Luz María López (Puerto Rico)

When I think of you, a bubble of hummingbirds erupts in my breathing feathered galaxy of iridescence and smile. All of you is Babel and any language, living or dead, speaks of your eyes and of that dragonfly's intensity: fervid gaze on the crescent moon chalice. You are volatile, and I do not question your mastery to walk over the water. It is you who sprinkles magic on the wings of angels, to fly and return to the heights of infinite heavens. You nourish me with magic and due to you I am generous.

Your skin is daintier than the breath of a prayer and your grace, marvel dragon of incendiary heart. When you walk, the stones stand up and surrender to the dust coming out of your steps. And if I were to talk about your tenderness, I assume the risk of spilling myself in sighs and get vanished; but I can say that you sense and feel the marrow of each word and it thrills your soul, that from within you a clarity emerges that bristles every hair of your body and your eyes get deified as two mandalas in which Shiva and Agni officiate ceremonies and it is like this that rites bloom lucidly.

And your lips: molten mineral reddened in the crucible of a thousand-year-old prophecy, that's when the earth trembles its poems, and it's nothing other than the passage hummingbirds open in the day, to shiver for you all night.

You are mysterious, almost unnamable, for your name is pronounced with a clean heart, for when you are named, splendid flowers will invariably emerge loaded with dreams.

A girl of thousand eternities you are, and you know how to render the sun and the moon at your feet, not to play, but to care for them. You are my temple, my east and west, my north and south, my zenith and nadir. And all the Babel's languages, living and dead Babel's

languages, are not enough to express everything that happens, when I think of you.

The Call

Adjei Agyei-Baah

(In response to Kofi Awoonor's "A Call")

I was told they would come
When the old priest had joined the sleepers;
They would surely come for me
Once my umbilical cord remained buried in their grove.
For the gods always find their earthly voice
And patiently, I waited for the call.

I was told about the messengers' visit
With a voice
Only the chosen could hear;
These powerful midgets and their miraculous manifestations
Feet back-to-front and sweeping beards.

I honored their call with reverence
Lest chose madness over greatness

And so they came
Crossed my path where the rival streams paired up
And ferried me across in their boat of whirlwinds—
Fed me on sisal leaves and made me slept on grating boughs
Till my tongue found a new song in the bitterness of their potion
And I returned in dotted spots of clay with a cow tail in my hand

languages, are not enough to express everything that happens, when I think of you.

The Call

Adjei Agyei-Baah

(In response to Kofi Awoonor's "A Call")

I was told they would come
When the old priest had joined the sleepers;
They would surely come for me
Once my umbilical cord remained buried in their grove.
For the gods always find their earthly voice
And patiently, I waited for the call.

I was told about the messengers' visit
With a voice
Only the chosen could hear;
These powerful midgets and their miraculous manifestations
Feet back-to-front and sweeping beards.

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Ready to lead my people down the uncrooked path of the gods.

La Llamada

Adjei Agyei-Baah

Translated into Spanish by *Tomas Sanchez Hidalgo*

(En homenaje a “Una llamada”, de Kofi Awoonor)

Me dijeron que vendrían
cuando el viejo sacerdote se hubiese unido a los durmientes;
seguramente vendrían a por mí.
Una vez que mi cordón umbilical hubiese quedado enterrado en
su arboleda.
Porque los dioses siempre encuentran su voz terrenal.
Y, pacientemente, esperé la llamada.

Me hablaron de la visita de los mensajeros.
Con una voz
que sólo los elegidos podían oír;
esos enanos poderosos y sus manifestaciones milagrosas.
Pies al frente y barbas hasta el suelo.

Honré su llamada con una reverencia.
Que no se elija la locura sobre la grandeza.

Y entonces vinieron.
Crucé mi camino donde las corrientes rivales se emparejaron.
Y me llevaron en su bote de torbellinos...
Alimentándome con hojas de sisal, me dormí en las ramas de la
rejilla,
hasta que mi lengua encontró una nueva canción en la amargura

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de su poción.

Y volví en manchas de arcilla con una cola de vaca en la mano.
Listo para guiar a mi gente por el camino crudo de los dioses.

To The Widow

Adjei Agyei-Baah

You are the sleepless duck
Who rests on a single leg
Keeps vigil over a silent compound
And wait upon the ancestral spirits
To come for the last morsel of the day

You are the abandoned lover
Who plies the memory lane in acidic tears
Walking the footpath that closes in with weeds
And mull over multiple mouths meowing to be muted

Your bed is made of a bamboo
Denied of warmth by the icy hands of fate
Its discomfort turning you into an early morn bird
That wakes to catch no worm

You are the quivering lamb at the kangaroo court
Around you the predatory pride prowls
The ripen pawpaw by the roadside
That the wayfarer chances upon with joy

You whom tradition mocks with hyena's laughter:
The wicked witch who killed the breadwinner
The half dark moon that must be caged in the murky skies

de su poción.

Y volví en manchas de arcilla con una cola de vaca en la mano.
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And forced to take an oath of innocence
By gulping down bath water from your husband corpse

But you are now the desert cactus
Who once nursed your seeds in the hooves of the passing caravan
And prayed for the rains to water them anywhere they fell
For now your children have returned through the stormy weathers
With a tearful joy for your crackled lips

A la viuda

Adjei Agyei-Baah

Translated into Spanish by *Tomas Sanchez Hidalgo*

Eres el pato sin dormir
que descansa sobre una sola pierna.
Vigila un compuesto silencioso.
Y espera a los espíritus ancestrales,
para venir por el último bocado del día.

Tu eres el amante abandonado.
¿Quién recorre el camino de la memoria en lágrimas ácidas?
Caminando por el sendero que se cierra con maleza.
Y reflexiona sobre múltiples bocas maullando para ser silenciadas.

Tu cama está hecha de bambú.
Denegada de calor por las manos heladas del destino.
Su incomodidad te convierte en un ave matutina
que se despierta para no atrapar gusanos.

Eres el cordero tembloroso en la cancha del canguro.
A tu alrededor el orgullo depredador merodea.
La papaya mad

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By gulping down bath water from your husband corpse

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A tu alrededor el orgullo depredador merodea.
La papaya mad

ura al borde del camino.

¡Que el caminante se arriesgue con alegría!

Tú, cuya tradición se burla con la risa de la hiena:

la malvada bruja que mató al sostén de la familia.

La media luna oscura que debe ser enjaulada en los oscuros cielos.

Y obligada a prestar juramento de inocencia,

al tragar el agua del baño de su marido cadáver

Pero ahora eres el cactus del desierto.

Quien una vez cuidó tus semillas en los cascotes de la caravana que pasaba.

Y oró por las lluvias para regarlas donde cayeran.

Por ahora tus hijos han vuelto a través de los tempestuosos días.

Con una alegría llorosa por tus labios estridentes.

San Salvador Atenco

Adriana Díaz Enciso

I.

The mind's reflection.
The river that runs underground
the drops running from the fountain
The drought.
The crystal lake. The bridge.
The child looking in the mirror.
A pathway's fragrant grass.

And now, now
the drought, and the earth drowning
in the blood unleashed, its barrenness.

The violence.

The distant land getting closer
duplicated in the hardened heart
minuscule, a pebble,
a dry red clod of dirt
broken blow by blow by blow
--the violence.

The mind's reflection.
This dry river
this burning dry course that I walk.

Up there the infinite skies.
Up there my prayer
rambling.

Up there the things that float:
 the cotton-wool clouds, the angels, wings.
Below the drought.
Below, here, the blood.
The blows.
The blows on the face the backbone
of the purest ivory we're propped against.
How dry the fountain of words!,
how hardened this red rough stone
 and how brutal
the blood, its explosion
on the silent face of poverty.

Up there, in the untouchable light, the smoke
 the liberated shape of conflagration.
Let the earth burn and be consumed,
let it burn with this rock, my Lord,
 that red and hardened becomes ever smaller
 orphaned of all prayer and all praise.

II.

The rage.
The red rage.
The sky the bowl of rage.
The scream that strikes against the crystal
 that does not break it
 that returns to the earth.
The splinter.
 The splinter driven in.
The crying the inner river
the blood that inwards weeps,
and towards silence.

Which God is it that cries for this blood running,
Which God laments the ill-fortune

Of the poor of the earth?

Is it the same God that opens up the day,
its blue sea covering
the sudden silence in the heat, the insects,
the flowers' burning colour?

The God of the soft carpet, is it,
the petals fallen from the peach tree?

San Salvador Atenco

Adriana Díaz Enciso

1.

Pensamiento.

El río que corre subterráneo —
las gotas de la fuente que se escapan

La sequía.

El lago de cristal. El puente.

La hierba fragante de un camino.

Y ahora, ahora
la sequía, la tierra que se ahoga
en la sangre desatada,
su aridez.

La violencia.

La tierra lejana que se acerca
duplicada en el corazón endurecido
minúsculo guijarro
terrón de barro seco y rojo
que se rompe a golpe y golpe
la violencia.

Pensamiento.

Este río seco
este cauce abrasador en que camino.

Arriba los cielos infinitos.

Arriba mi oración
deshilvanada.

Arriba lo que flota:

las nubes de algodón, los ángeles, las alas.
Abajo la sequía.
Abajo, aquí, la sangre.

Los golpes.
Los golpes en el rostro en la columna
del más puro marfil que nos sostiene.
Qué seca la fuente de palabras,
qué endurecido este pedrusco rojo
la sangre su estallido
en el rostro sin voz de la pobreza.

Arriba, en la intocable luz, el humo
la forma liberada de un incendio:

Que arda la tierra y se consuma,
que arda con esta piedra, Señor mío,
que roja y endurecida empequeñece
huérfana de oración y de alabanza.

2.

La rabia.
La roja rabia.
El cielo el cuenco rojo de la rabia.
El grito que golpea el cristal
que no lo rompe
que devuelto a la tierra se hace añicos.
La astilla.
La astilla que se encaja.
El llanto el río interior
la sangre que hacia dentro corre envenenada.

Qué dios es el que llora esta sangre en su fuga
qué dios el que lamenta el charco enlodado de la suerte,
la suerte de los pobres de la tierra.

¿Es el mismo dios que estrena el día,
su mar azul, cubriendo
el súbito silencio del calor, la paz de los insectos,
el esmalte incendiado de las flores?

¿El dios de la suave alfombra
de pétalos caídos del durazno?

Mexico, September 1996

Adriana Díaz Enciso

With unswerving will a shadow moves forward;
it's getting closer, stubborn,
here to conceal paradise
with the unwholesome sweet odour of death:
blood, crying, iron footsteps and the grass
yielding beneath its feet.

Does it matter if its name was the sea, blue purity, Puerto Escondido,
the coasts of Split, Alexandria?
It was the incandescent jewel in the heart of the dream. The gold and
the turquoise.

That other body that grew within your body,
rising above your skin—pale and tired, your skin; its slowly ageing—
with a living garment the colour of sand,
no more your skin but the skin of gods: Happiness, Desire, Wisdom.
With that body you possessed an adored body,
the feverish urgency to inhabit fleeting life,
life ever dazzling,
superb spectacle —undecipherable
made to be seen.

Just to bear witness
then sink, in the dead's powerful silence, its fearful beauty.

With your body and your dreams now tortured by the threat
you protected that body made of sun and your entrails
and with your skin that bore another fragrance, desire, different
ointments
you exorcised the coward's weapons, the violence in the dream.
With your love again you gave yourself up to the visions:
the dignified death of one who lived in paradise

and who deciphered the miracle's scriptures.

But those were other days: yesterday.
The timeless time of creation and Man
making up his faltering dialogue with God.
And now
you have to be blind to touch the light.
To dream up God's sleeping face.
God's uneasy, fleeting dream.

One afternoon you saw your eyes' awesome beauty,
the impossible portrait of your eyes just like two blind moons,
clean and serene with their blood rivers hanging in the middle of the
night.
In the abstract universe that is only night,
darkness, mystery and there —the light,
your eyes a yellowish gleam,
the blue-trimmed moon,
the earth, other planets and the final moment hanging over it,
a promise to liberate the earth
without justice.

And you already blind, asleep,
are moving forward through the black waters of the womb
that holds you
fighting its density, the puzzled memory,
fighting the stagnant slime of pain
so that you can touch again the beloved body,
release it from the exhausted sleep he dreams beside you every night
vanquished by fear, uncertainty,
by the violence that you can smell among the sweetness of the
burning bedroom,
beneath the burning palm tree,

and being blind you recognize it,
you talk to it with the voice of this instinct in its origin fading,
you cling to it, you purify it:
your make it blind,
fishes from the abyssal darkness, the two of you
seeking the light
they've created themselves to guard off the exasperation in the
stillness
as they find it

Thus they go, holding on to the dream,
to the powerful past that names them,
past loves strewn in the sky, confetti-like,
with their grief and their passion, their bitterness,
holding on to that light they still hope exists in the womb of the
ocean
and in the closed-up depths of the universe
while life goes on, follows its course —imperturbable,
indifferent to violence,
impregnating loving bodies, by their desires' light illuminated;
the blind bodies.

And so they all move on
satisfied with their fugacity,
with love and memory watching over the destruction of paradise,
the chilling voice of truth reaching out in the jungle,
the many dead they saw before, far and near and on their beds
before going blind
in order to seek the light
illuminated by their eyes' moons, majestic and opaque.

MÉXICO, SEPTIEMBRE, 1996

Adriana Díaz Enciso

Una sombra avanza con voluntad inquebrantable; se acerca necia
a ocultar el paraíso
con el malsano aroma dulce de la muerte:
sangre, llanto, pasos de hierro y la hierba
doblándose bajo sus pies.

¿Importa si se llamaba mar, pureza azul, Puerto Escondido, las costas
de Split, Alejandría?
Era la joya incandescente en el centro del sueño. El oro y la turquesa.
El otro cuerpo que crecía en tu cuerpo,
que vencía tu piel cansada y pálida, su lento envejecer,
con una piel viva color de arena,
no más tu piel sino la piel de dioses: Felicidad, Deseo, Sabiduría.
Con ese cuerpo poseías un cuerpo amado,
con febril urgencia de habitar la vida pasajera,
deslumbrante siempre,
espectáculo soberbio, indescifrable hecho para la mirada.
Sólo para dar fe
y hundirte luego en el silencio poderoso y de temible belleza de los
muertos.

Con tu cuerpo y tus sueños torturados ya por la amenaza
protegías aquel cuerpo hecho de sol y de tus vísceras
y con tu piel de otro aroma, otro deseo, otros aceites,
conjurabas las armas del cobarde, la violencia del sueño.
De nuevo te entregabas con tu amor a las visiones:
la muerte digna del que habitó en el paraíso
y descifró las escrituras del milagro.

Pero eran otros tiempos: ayer.
El tiempo sin tiempo de la Creación y el hombre
inventando su diálogo balbuciente con Dios.
Y ahora
hay que ser ciegos para tocar la luz.
Para inventar el rostro dormido de Dios.
El sueño inquieto y fugitivo de Dios.

Viste una tarde la belleza pasmosa de tus ojos,
el retrato imposible de tus ojos igual que dos lunas ciegas,
limpias y serenas con sus ríos de sangre colgando en medio de la
noche.
En el universo abstracto que sólo es noche,
oscuridad, misterio y ahí la luz,
tus ojos de un fulgor amarillento,
la luna orlada de azul,
la tierra, otros planetas y el momento final que pende sobre ella,
promesa de liberar la tierra sin justicia.

Y tú, ciega ya, dormida,
avanzas entre el agua negra del vientre que te guarda
luchando contra su densidad, la confusa memoria,
contra el limo estancado del dolor
para volver a tocar el cuerpo amado,
rescatarlo del sueño exhausto que duerme cada noche junto a ti
vencido por el temor, la incertidumbre,
la violencia que huele desde la dulzura de la habitación en llamas
bajo la palmera en llamas,
y ciega lo reconoces,
le hablas con la voz de este instinto perdiéndose en su origen,
te abrazas a él, lo purificas:
lo vuelves ciego,
peces los dos de las oscuridades abisales

buscando la luz
que han creado ellos mismos para no exasperarse en la quietud
mientras la encuentran,
y van así, abrazados al sueño,
al pasado poderoso que los nombra,
a los amores esparcidos como confeti al cielo
con su dolor y su pasión y su amargura,
a la luz que aún confían exista en el vientre del mar
y en el fondo cerrado del universo
mientras la vida sigue su curso imperturbable,
indiferente a la violencia,
preñando los cuerpos amantes iluminados por la luz de sus deseos;
los cuerpos ciegos.

Y avanzan todos
conformes con su fugacidad,
velando con el amor y la memoria la destrucción del paraíso,
la escalofriante voz de la verdad, desde la selva,
los muchos muertos que vieron antes, lejos y cerca y en sus lechos
antes de quedarse ciegos
para buscar la luz
iluminados por las lunas majestuosas y opacas de sus ojos.

Ovación a la líder aimara Rita Puma muerta a los 30 años

Gloria Mendoza Borda

Rita Puma no aparece en muchos documentos como la máxima figura femenina de la Sublevación de 1923, todo por falta de investigación.

Los cargos contra ella son muy claros, fue acusada de ser agitadora, propagandista, organizadora de los campesinos de Mobo, sobre todo por ser una revolucionaria y haberse enfrentado valientemente...

(Julio Mendoza Díaz)

-I-

Mi kullaka¹ Rita Puma soñaba con el albedrío
de ovejas, vacas, perros, y muchos lobos
Rita Puma pastora de zorros y cuervos
en la retina de ojitos de agua
olfateando los sembríos
bajo la cabellera azul del Titicaca
arengaba a las estrellas ribereñas
para que los zorros no se coman
a los muertos
para que los muertos no mueran
de tanta muerte
mi kullaka Rita Puma danza la historia oculta
de los sin tierra subsistiendo su tierra
Rita Puma traduce
la rebelión de los aimaras
agitadas batientes de kantutas²

oh marismas de la memoria
en el lenguaje de nuestras kullakas
chozas y fogones
Rita Puma no puede hablar
con la boca cerrada
se zambulle entre azules aves
aparecidas en su vuelo
danza de murciélagos desde las sombras.

II

Guerrera
infatigable
no escapa
convoca a los ayllus
de pie en la compuerta de Mukuraya
se aferra a las balsas de totora
húmeda su arenga
dulce su prédica
chilliwa3 brava su plática
chilliwa brava sus cabellos
agita su manto látigo
despliega fuego
arremete contra terratenientes
si todos tuviéramos
este atrevimiento
somos torcazas
danzando tu fama
te esperamos en Moho
Rita Puma detona
en el vientre de Jachajá
en Moho donde los bosques
llegan al Olimpo

para encender
tu derruida choza.

III

Sueña
con la boca abierta
inmóvil en la pradera
cae aguacero
retumban los sicuris
imploran las bandas
desde cordilleras
se ponen bravas las pampas
sabor a muña
brutalmente estrangulada
colgada de la copa de un árbol
se hundió el sol en el lago
Rita Puma flor silvestre
de la historia
tu boca abierta
es el grito de las colinas
es el grito de Merkemarca⁴
nos dejaste
pintándote azul Rita Puma azul
bajo el aterrizaje de las mariposas a la vida
ha vuelto Rita Puma
para decirnos que nos ama
para advertirnos
su fe por los aimaras de estos tiempos.

1 Kullaka: hermana (aimara)

2 Kantuta: flor nacional del mundo andino (aimara)

3 Chilliva: paja (aimara)

Ovation to the Aymara Leader Rita Puma, dead at age 30

Gloria Mendoza Borda

Translated into English by Don Cellini

*Rita Puma does not appear in many
documents as the most important
female figure of the Uprising of 1923,
only because of lack of research.
The charges are very clear:
she was accused of being an agitator,
a propagandist, the organizer of the
peasants of Moho, but especially of being
a revolutionary who
faced it bravely...
(Julio Mendoza Díaz)*

I

My kullaka¹ Rita Puma dreamed of choice
of sheep, cattle, dogs, and many wolves
Rita Puma shepherd of foxes and ravens
in the retina of springs of water
sniffing the plantings
under the hair blue of Lake Titicaca
she was haranguing the riverside stars
so that the foxes did not eat up
the dead
so that the dead did not die

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from so much death
my sister Rita Puma dances the secret history
of the landless scraping by on their earth
Rita Puma translates
the rebellion of the Aymaras
fluttering swing of kantutas²
oh marshlands of memory
in the language of our sisters
huts and stoves
Rita Puma cannot talk
with her mouth closed
she dives among blue birds
that appeared on their flight
dance of bats from the shadows.

II

Tireless
warrior
she does not escape
she summons the Ayllus
standing in the Mukuraya floodgate
she sticks to the reed rafts
humid her harangue
sweet her sermon
chilliwa³ brave her conversation
chilliwa brave her hairs
she waves her cloak whip
she opens fire
she rushes forward at landowners
if we had all
this adventurousness
we are Torcazas

dancing your fame
we wait for you in Mojo
Rita Puma explodes
in the Jachajá belly
in Mojo where the forests
come to the Olympus
to set fire
to your hut in ruins.

III

She dreams
with her mouth open
motionless in the meadow
downpour falls
the Scuris resound
they beg the bands
from mountain ranges
the pampas become brave
flavor of mint
brutally strangulated
hung from the goblet of a tree
the sun sank in the lake
Rita Puma wild flower
of the history
your open mouth
it is the scream of the hills
it is the scream of Merkemarca4
you left us
making yourself up blue Rita Puma blue
under the landing of the butterflies of life
Rita Puma has returned
to tell us that she loves us

to tell us about
her faith in the Aymara of these times.

1 *Kullaka*: sister

2 *Kantuta*: national flower of the Andean world

3 *Chilliwa*: straw

4. *Merkemarca*: old town over a mountain where dwarfs lived

La danza del *wititi* en el dolor de los padres de los padres

Gloria Mendoza Borda

(Luego del fatídico sismo, 2016)

Ellos solían correr con el furor de la juventud
ellos los que abrieron el horizonte al compás del wititi
los abuelos se niegan a salir de sus caídas casas
ellos soñaron con el fatídico movimiento
son sabios saben leer el cielo y la tierra
el abismo habita es su interior y sólo callan
se les apagó la voz
estos abuelitos solían enamorarse
sus amadas acostumbraban recoger flores
danzaban el wititi empujados por el viento
en las fiestas tradicionales
gorriones los acompañaban en su silbido
cuyes chillaban detrás de las abuelitas
-bellos sombreros bordados las distinguen
en medio de las chacras y el cielo azul
ellos como vizcachas cruzaban el monte
ellos los padres de los padres

to tell us about
her faith in the Aymara of these times.

1 *Kullaka*: sister

2 *Kantuta*: national flower of the Andean world

3 *Chilliwa*: straw

4. *Merkemarca*: old town over a mountain where dwarfs lived

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ellos como vizcachas cruzaban el monte
ellos los padres de los padres

cubiertos con ropas color tierra
bostezo de tierra
la vida de tierra
la comida color tierra
los mapas de sus rostros de tierra
dibujos de tierra sobre sus manos río lugareño
árboles caídos, cataratas azules desbordaron en su
memoria
ellos me duelen, algún día no podré hablar como ellos
origen de nuestra historia el barro avanza taciturno
y no podemos enfrentarnos a la furia de la naturaleza
tiempo pavoroso donde el grito de los hombres no basta.

Wititi: danza de la comunidad de Colca - Arequipa

The dance of the *wititi* in the pain of the parents of the parents

Gloria Mendoza Borda

Translated into English by *Don Cellini*

(After the fateful earthquake, 2016)

They used to run with the fury of youth
they who opened the horizon to the beat of the *wititi*
the grandparents refused to leave their fallen houses
they dreamed of the fateful movement
they are wise to read the sky and the earth
the abyss inhabits its interior and only they are still
they quieted their voices
these grandparents used to fall in love
their loved ones used to collect flowers
they danced the *wititi* pushed by the wind
in traditional festivities
sparrows accompanied them by whistling
guinea pigs screeched behind the grandmothers
-distinguished by their beautiful embroidered hats
in the middle of small farms and blue sky
they were crossing the mount like the Vizcachas
they, the parents of the parents
covered with clothes the color of earth
yawn of earth
life of earth
food the color of earth
the maps of their faces of earth
drawings of earth on the hands of river villagers
fallen trees, blue waterfalls overflowed in their
memory
they make me sad, some day I will not be able to speak like them

about the origin of our history the mud advances taciturn
and we cannot face the fury of nature
frightening time where screams of men are not enough.
wiliti: a dance of the Colca, Arequipav community

The Nile

Alex Nderitu

From the womb of Lake Victoria, I burst forth,
Embarking on an epic journey towards the north
Where I will rendezvous with the Mediterranean.
Many are the obstacles and by the time I reach my destination,
I will be as crooked as a politician.

In some parts, I plunge hundreds of feet over cliff walls,
Sending off clouds of vapour as thick as tear gas.
In others, my brisk pace is reduced to leisurely stroll.
Enforced to tributaries, I soldier on to my distant goal,
Snaking through fantastic valleys and conquering scorching deserts.
‘Why doesn’t this river dry up?’ mused the ancients.
‘And where, oh where, lies her secret source?’

For millennia, I held my secrets fast –
My age, my origin, my tributaries, my course.
Before I revealed all, men had to die as if cursed.
I am the Keeper of Genesis, Guardian of the Past.
I enabled great civilizations to spring from bare dust.
The pyramids, catacombs, the delta in the Mediterranean Sea,
The Pharaohs, their subjects and mighty dynasty,
All owe their existence to me.

Without me, Osiris would not resurrect⁶,

⁶ Osiris, in Egyptian mythology, was a major god who was killed by a kin but later resurrected. The Nile’s annual flooding provides much-needed silt that makes produce grow. The sprouting of the plants commemorates the rising of Osiris and marks the beginning of the Egyptian New Year.

Pudding-soft paddies would be as hard as tins,
Egyptians would go down like bowling pins,
Hippos, crocodiles, sacred ibis and fish of every description
Would lie lifeless, awaiting my resurrection!
I am the real Goddess of Fertility, no river touches me:
The Amazon falls short, the Thames only comes up to my knee.
I am Anubis⁷ among jackals, Sobek⁸ among crocodiles.
I am the Nile.

⁷ Jackal-headed ancient Egyptian god

⁸ Crocodile-headed ancient Egyptian god

El Nilo

Alex Nderitu

Translated into Spanish by *Tomas Sanchez Hidalgo*

Desde el vientre del lago Victoria, estallé,
embarcando en un viaje épico hacia el norte,
donde me reuniré con el Mediterráneo.
Muchos son los obstáculos, y, para cuando llegue a mi destino,
estaré tan torcido como un político.

En algunas partes, me desplomo cientos de pies sobre paredes de
acantilados,
enviando nubes de vapor tan espesas como gas lacrimógeno.
En otras, mi ritmo acelerado se reduce al pasear tranquilamente.
Aplicado en mis obligaciones, seguí mi distante objetivo,
caminando por fantásticos valles y conquistando ardientes
desiertos.
"¿Por qué este río no se seca?," reflexionaron los antiguos.
"¿Y dónde, oh dónde, está su fuente secreta?"

Durante milenios, mantuve mis secretos
(mi edad, mi origen, mis afluentes, mi curso).
Antes de revelarlo todo, los hombres tenían que morir,
como si estuvieran malditos.
Soy el Guardián del Génesis,
el Guardián del Pasado.
Permití que grandes civilizaciones brotaran del polvo desnudo.
Las pirámides, catacumbas, el delta en el mar Mediterráneo,
Los faraones, sus súbditos y su poderosa dinastía:
todos me deben su existencia.
Sin mí, Osiris* no resucitaría,
los arrozales suaves al pudín serían tan duros como latas,
los egipcios caerían como bolos,
hipopótamos, cocodrilos, ibis sagrados y peces de toda
descripción.
¡Mentiría sin vida, esperando mi resurrección!

Soy la verdadera diosa de la fertilidad, ningún río me toca:
el Amazonas se queda corto, el Támesis solo llega hasta mi rodilla.
Soy Anubis** entre los chacales, Sobek*** entre los cocodrilos.
Yo soy el Nilo.

*Osiris, en la mitología egipcia, fue un dios importante que fue asesinado por un pariente pero luego resucitó. La inundación anual del Nilo proporciona el sedimento tan necesario que hace que los productos crezcan. El brote de las plantas conmemora el surgimiento de Osiris y marca el comienzo del Año Nuevo egipcio.

**Antiguo dios egipcio con cabeza de chacal.

***Antiguo dios egipcio con cabeza de cocodrilo.

Everyone Knows a Kamau

Alex Nderitu

I have had enough of these European hotels
With their entrées, wine lists, cigar lists, and four-course dinners.
Parking is by valet, tables are pre-booked, background music is generic.

Take me back to Kenya, where everyone knows a 'Kamau'.

Let me sit in a sweltering kiosk drinking tea with *mandazi*,
Listening to a radio blasting Benga, M-Pgithi or Rhumba music.
For lunch, I have a variety of African dishes to choose from:
Githeri, *irio*, *matooke*, *ugali* with *managu* or *ndengu* or *madondo*,
Chapati with beef or *ndengu* or chicken, rice with curry – the list goes on.

Transport is fast and affordable – in the form of *matatus*:
A hybrid between a disco hall and a decorated tour van.
Two dark-skinned college girls in bottom-hugging tights chat incessantly
As the *matatu* weaves through traffic like a multi-coloured beetle.

On reaching my block of flats, I say hello to Kioko the watchman,
Akinyi the shopkeeper and Oduor my next-door neighbour
Who is accompanied by his beautiful Swahili wife, Malaika.
As I do not have the rent money on me, I avoid Kamau the landlord.
Yes, in Kenya, there's always a Kamau.

Todo el mundo conoce a un Kamau

Alex Nderitu

Translated into Spanish by *Tomas Sanchez Hidalgo*

He tenido suficiente con esos hoteles europeos.
Con sus entrantes, y sus listas de vinos (y de cigarros).
Y cenas de cuatro platos.
El estacionamiento es por ticket,
las mesas están reservadas,
la música de fondo es genérica.
Llévame de regreso a Kenia,
donde todos conocen a un Kamau.

Déjame sentarme en un sofocante quiosco tomando té con
mandazi,
escuchando una radio a todo volumen de música de Benga,
Mĩ githĩ o Rhumba.
Para el almuerzo, tengo una variedad de platos africanos para
elegir:
githeri, irio, matoke, ugali con managu o ndengu o madondo,
chapati con carne o ndengu o pollo, arroz con curry (la lista
continúa).

El transporte es rápido y asequible, en forma de matatus:
un híbrido entre una discoteca y una furgoneta decorada.
Dos chicas universitarias de piel oscura, con medias,
abrazan el fondo y charlan incesantemente,
a medida que el matatu serpentea a través del tráfico,
como un escarabajo multicolor.

Al llegar a mi bloque de pisos,
saludo al vigilante Kioko, y al tendero Akinyi;
también a Oduor, mi vecino de al lado,
a quien acompaña su bella esposa swahili, Malaika.
Como no tengo el dinero del alquiler,

evito a Kamau, el propietario.
Sí, en Kenia, siempre hay un Kamau.

Más allá de Gizeh

Tomas Hidalgo

En página par, esquinado,
no funcionaron los ruegos
(y eso es algo que no explican
en los anuncios de la tele),
tampoco al pasar a impar,
ni al extenderse el verbo,
y cuando llegó a portada centro
tampoco funcionó, no señor:
por eso ahora
hasta Abu Simbel llega
cuando gritan
a los dueños de las hambres.

evito a Kamau, el propietario.
Sí, en Kenia, siempre hay un Kamau.

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tampoco funcionó, no señor:
por eso ahora
hasta Abu Simbel llega
cuando gritan
a los dueños de las hambres.

Life is a losing team

Tomas Hidalgo

Vidas color frío
sobre eterno suelo movedizo,
nervios a flor de piel
segundos antes de un abordaje:
un par de tibias y una carabela,
camino de la frontera.
Ron, ron, ron,
la-botella-de,
tal vida habría sido, sí,
eminentemente dura:
si la hubieseis tenido que vivir...
(y aún dicen que el pescado es caro).
Drake y Hawkins
y Errol Flint,
Barbanegra y Jack Sparrow:
industria alternativa del ocio palomitas:
Alcalá, Preciados, Sol,
a ras de suelo;
un par de tibias y una carabela:
si la hubieseis tenido que vivir...
(una vida al otro lado de la tormenta).

Epitafios

Tomas Hidalgo

Sunny “el volante” Fadesa

Tras nuestro regreso a Barajas,
estrellas mundiales del hockey sobre patines,
catártico recibimiento:
fui asesinado en seco
por fanático aplastamiento de la admiradora masa,
el rugido de la urbe en anárquica policromía.
Alcé antes las jarras del gallego triunfo
aunque el inca Sol me miró,
he sido muerto de éxito:
colocando ladrillos
camino del infinito.
Hospital Ramón y Cajal:
allá quedaron demás miembros
no tan sólo
del quinteto titular,
un par sólo rasguños, otros graves, después muertos:
Said, Lucescu, Nwanko, Vladimiro;
bongolaris –de Dakar- en la grada nos animaron con los bongos
patrocinados por Money Transfer
coach Trichet liderando desde el banco,
¿al más puro estilo 1959 para la rojigualda del pollo y las flechas?,
quizá.
[Mientras tanto...]
Hoy Nwan-koco-mu-ni-ca,
Nwan-koco-mu-ni-ca,
sobrecarga de gorrillas a la puerta del Ramony. *
Los bongolaris de Dakar no esperan respuesta.

Said

Fui muerto a la carrera,
a diferencia del pariente Nwanko,
compañero de sangre, sudor y *llate*,
otrora estrellas del triunfant ibérico
deporte-de-mentira sobre ruedas.
Preciados, metro,
a ras de suelo,
industria alternativa del ocio palomitas,
Alcalá, Sol, Carmen, Carretas.
Muerto de facto en el tumulto corriendo
delante de los azules grises.

Nwanko

Sobreviví como sabéis
a dos jaurías humanas,
y antes a una marítima travesía en el desierto
(y, extendiendo el Memento –la persistente cuenta atrás-,
salí también ileso de Dakar,
y antes de mi aldea, y hasta de mi infancia,
y...).
El resto del trayecto fue sálvese quien pueda.

** Hospital Ramón y Cajal (Madrid).*

Epitaphs

Tomas Hidalgo

Translated from Spanish by *Jack Little*

Sunny "the steering wheel" Fadesa

After our return to Barajas
as world roller hockey stars,
in a cathartic reception
I was killed without blood shed
by the fanatical crush of the admiring masses,
the roaring city an anarchic polychrome.
I rose before Galician jugs of triumph
although the Inca Sun looked upon me,
I have been dead of success:
placing bricks
on a path of infinity.

Ramón y Cajal Hospital:
there, other members remained
not only
of the titular quintet,
some with only scratches, others more serious, then deceased:
Said, Lucescu, Nwanko, Vladimiro;
bongolaris -of Dakar- in the stands encouraged us with the
bongos
sponsored by Money Transfer
coach Trichet leading from the bank,
the purest style of 1959, for the *rojigualda*, of the chicken and
arrows? *
maybe.
[In the meantime...]
Today Nwan-koco-mu-ni-ca,
Nwan-koco-mu-ni-ca,
an overload of illegal parking men in the door of the Ramony. **
The bongolaris of Dakar await an answer.

Said

I was dead to the race,
unlike the kinsmen, Nwanko,
brother of blood, sweat and yate,
former stars of the Iberian *trionfant*
the sport-of-lying on wheels.
Precious, metro,
at ground level,
a popcorn alternative leisure industry,
Alcalá, Sol, Carmen, Carretas.
De facto dead in the tumult of running
in front of the blue-greys.

Nwanko

I survived as you know
two packs of humans,
and before a maritime crossing of the desert
(and, extending the Memento - the persistent countdown -,
I also left unharmed from Dakar,
and before my village, and even from my childhood,
and...).
The rest of the journey was 'every man for himself'.

*A play on the eagle and arrow, both symbols of Francoism.

** Hospital Ramón y Cajal (Madrid).

In this Potato

Beaton Galafa

I've lived my life well – where the gods wanted me to be.
On ranges and plateaus towering over the blueness of our lakes.
I've watched men rowing boats day and night
Catching fish and colds in all seasons.
Feeding us from morning when the sun is shy and red
To dusk when it's red again and runs from night.
Paving way for little ones to sing for the moon
Like it will lurk in the lake of stars forever.
I've always sat on the verandah watching kids dance in the rains
Soaked in rainwater washing their dirt down the little drains
It creates. Reminiscing about my youth when there were rumours.
About lions escaping from parks and grannies warning us
That a man in our village had created a big river alligator out of a
lizard
To halve in the jaws an enemy and hit the bits against violent waters.
To Spill blood down a thirsty river.
I've walked in forests on vast tracts of land trapped in greenness.
Decorating the potato lying in the grounds – its oil and uranium lying
still.
Waking up to the songs of birds – sometimes it's like we're all in a
dream.
Thoughts of long ago carried over into the future
With a people calm as the sea breeze surrendering their lives to love.
I've lived my life well – where the gods wanted me to be.
Surrounded by spirits manning *Sapitwa* and *Chingwe's Hole*
Along with the *Chambo* I have swam in fresh waters from lakes and
rivers.
I've ascended to the sky in summer smoke and clouds to meet
Mphambe.

En esta papa

Beaton Galafa

Translated from English by *Ricardo Felix Rodriguez*

He vivido mi vida bien—donde los dioses querían que estuviera.
En cordilleras y mesetas que se elevan sobre el azul de nuestros lagos.
He visto hombres remar en botes de día y de noche.
Capturar peces y resfriados en todas las temporadas.
Alimentándonos desde el alba cuando el sol es tímido y rojo.
Hasta el oscurecer cuando está rojo de nuevo y huye de la noche.
Pavimentando el camino para que los más pequeños canten a la luna.
Como si acechara en el lago de las estrellas por siempre.
Siempre me he sentado en la veranda viendo a los niños bailar bajo la lluvia
Empapados en agua de lluvia, lavando su tierra por los pequeños desagües.
Crear. Recordando mi juventud cuando había rumores.
Acerca de leones que escapaban de parques y abuelas alertándonos.
Que un hombre en nuestro pueblo había creado un gran caimán de río de un lagarto
Para dividir en dos a un enemigo en las fauces y golpear los pedazos contra las aguas turbulentas.
Para derramar sangre en un río sediento.
He caminado en bosques en vastas extensiones de tierra atrapadas en el verdor.
Decorar la papa en el suelo— aceite y uranio en reposo.
Despertarse con las canciones de los pájaros— a veces es como si todos estuviéramos en un sueño.
Pensamientos de antaño llevados hacia el futuro.
Con la tranquilidad de un pueblo mientras la brisa del mar entrega sus vidas al amor.
He vivido bien mi vida— donde los dioses querían que yo estuviera.
Rodeado de espíritus que ocupan el hueco de Sapitwa y Chingwe.

Junto con *Chambo* he nadado en aguas dulces de lagos y ríos.
He ascendido al cielo en verano con el humo y las nubes para
encontrarme con *Mphambe*.

VII

Ingrid Bringas

Cuando aprendí la palabra muerte
apenas se construía mi casa, mi abuela había muerto,
se habían secado los higos
cuando aprendí a pronunciar la palabra muerte ,
mi padre se había cortado con la navaja de afeitar
eran días de vigilia
graznaba la tarde como la luz heredada,
después de la plaga que azotó mi pueblo comprendí la palabra muerte,
el hado funesto de las cosas
aprendí a perder con la palabra,
a dejar ir
a apagar la sed cuando la muerte nos devora.

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chapbook, "Another Version of Me" in "Number 5" in the "Mexican Poetry
Series" edited by Jack Little*

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VII

Ingrid Bringas

Translated from the original Spanish version titled "VII" by Don Cellini

When I learned the word death
I had barely finished building my house, my grandmother had died,
the figs had dried up
when I learned to say the word death,
my father had cut himself with his straightedge razor
they were days of vigil
the afternoon cawed like inherited light,
after the plague that attacked my town I understood the word death,
the baneful fate of things
I learned to lose the word
to let go
to quench my thirst when death devours us.

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VIII

Ingrid Bringas

Cuando uso el vestido de mi madre, repito su nombre en voz alta
sorprendida siento su carne viva,
los pliegues de sus manos,
invoco con ella la felicidad engendrada,
su sonrisa como sandía

Cuando uso el vestido de mi madre en posición fetal,
Me enseñó a ser valiente a usar su risa más burlona,
A sobrevivir rodeada de extraños

Cuando uso el vestido de mi madre, acepto la muerte como obsequio
Y veo como la gente se hace más pequeña.

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VIII

Ingrid Bringas

Translated from the original Spanish version titled "VIII" by Don Cellini

When I wear my mother's dress, I say her name aloud
surprised I feel the living flesh,
the pleats from her hands,
I invoke with her the happiness it generated
her smile like a watermelon
When I wear my mother's dress in a fetal position,
I teach myself to be brave, to use my boldest laugh,
to survive surrounded by strangers
When I wear my mother's dress, I accept death as a gift
and I see how small people become.

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X

Ingrid Bringas

¿Cómo me recordará la gente cuando no exista?
con la cabeza reventada,
víctima de la ausencia insoportable de los otros,
ave de paso que apareció sobre mi puerta,
quizás era un presagio

¿Cómo me recordará la gente cuando no exista?
Yo , hombre
sin fisuras en el corazón,
el del cabello reseco

Yo, rey

Lisiado

¿Cómo me recordará la gente cuando no exista?
la gente no tiene memoria,
los enfermos no tienen memoria,
somos de pronto un recuerdo envuelto en olvido.

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X

Ingrid Bringas

Translated from the original Spanish version titled "X" by Don Cellini

How will people remember me when I am gone?
with the shattered head,
victim of the unbearable absence of others,
bird of passage that appeared above my door,
perhaps it was a prediction
How will people remember me when I am gone?
Me, a man
without fissures in the heart,
the one with the dry hair
Me, King
Crippled
How will people remember me when I am gone?
people have no memory,
the sick have no memory,
suddenly we are a memory wrapped in oblivion.

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Granny Be(a)

Nica Cornell

I don't know if she called herself an African.
She died before I called myself one.
She died before I called my Self.

She called herself a Catholic.
For her, it meant 'Love thy neighbour'

(not like the white woman who lives next door
strips her boy's ears on Easter Sunday, every Sunday, every day,
until I call Child Protection Services
but doesn't eat meat because it's unethical)

It's raising daughters who skinny-dip, grow hair in their armpits,
ask their Religious Studies teacher how the National Party call
themselves Christians,
eat acronyms UDF-ECC-MDM-TAC-UNESCO in their alphabet
soup.

It's raising sons who tend wounds, save dogs the *boeremake* rabid,
shoot their own feet instead of Namibian-Angolan-South African
sons.

They see her in the shape of my mouth.
My mother sees her in my softness.

I tend her
with my crochet
my typing speed
my monogamy

my difficulty losing weight
all a white woman should be when she is born in the 1920s

I tend her
with my humanism
my activism
my writing
my loyalty
my morality
my Spirit
all a white woman is
when she is also an African.

Abuelita Be (a)

Nica cornell

Translated from English by *Ricardo Felix Rodriguez*

No sé si ella se llamaba a sí misma africana.
Ella murió antes de que yo me llamara uno.
Ella murió antes de que yo llamara a mí Ser.

Ella se llamaba a sí misma católica.
Para ella, significaba "Ama a tu prójimo".

(No como la mujer blanca que vive al lado que
jala las orejas de su hijo el domingo de Pascua, todos los
domingos, todos los días,
Hasta que yo llame a los Servicios de Protección Infantil
pero no come carne porque no es ético)

Se trata de criar hijas que adelgazan, y les crecen vellos en las
axilas,
Pregúntele a su maestro de religión cómo en el Partido
Nacional se llaman a sí mismos Cristianos,
Come los acrónimos UDF-ECC-MDM-TAC-UNESCO en su
sopa de letras.

Se trata de criar hijos que atienden heridas, salvar a los perros
con rabo *boeremake*,
Disparar a sus propios pies en lugar de a los hijos namibianos-
angoleños-sudafricanos.

La ven en la forma de mi boca.
Mi madre la ve en mi suavidad.

La cuido
con mi crochet
mi velocidad de escritura

mi monogamia
mi dificultad para perder peso
Todo lo que una mujer blanca debería ser cuando nazca en la
década de 1920.

La cuido
con mi humanismo
mi activismo
mi escritura
mi lealtad
mi moralidad
mi espíritu
todo lo que una mujer blanca es
cuando también ella es africana.

El Pozo

Jack Little

Mira hacia el fondo.

Cuando el aguaconvierteenunazulpálido

y el cobre de la manillaestafrío y oxidado,

elpozova a invitarte a unabajaditamás del cubo.

Levántalodespacio, echaunamoneda, unaoración

alpozo del pueblo.

The Well

Jack Little

Translated from Spanish by *Don Cellini*

Take a deep look.

When the water turns a pale blue

and the copper handle is corroded and cold,

the well will invite you to lower the bucket once more.

Lift it slowly, toss in a coin, a prayer

to the well of this town.

El Pozo

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Por debajo de la lengua

Jack Little

Creo que mi voz tiene una indecisa vitalidad
que guardo por debajo de la lengua.
Es el resulto de la electricidad encontrado
en el espacio entre los labios de mis antepasados
justo antes de su primer beso de enamorados.

Ya, sus alas generan un ruido blanco
y desde la orilla de mi tercer diente un eco
bote del interior de mi mejilla hacia la otra.
Los ancianos se rían del sonido que sale
de la boca de este cuerpo que me carga.

Creo que por debajo de mi lengua, existe un regalo
que tal vez, Dios un día me dejará abrir.
Hasta entonces, me tapo el oído
cierro mi ojos y pasará los días buscando
libertad con mi sentido del olfato.

Beneath my Tongue

Jack Little

Translated from Spanish by *Don Cellini*

I think my voice has an indecisive vitality
that I keep beneath my tongue.
It is the result of the electricity found
in the space between the lips of my ancestors
just before their first loving kiss.
Their wings already generate a white noise
and from the shore of my third tooth an echo
bounces from one cheek to the other.
The ancestors laugh at the sound that comes out
of the mouth of this body of mine.
I believe that under my tongue, a gift exists
and perhaps one day God will allow me to open it.
Until then, I plug my ears,
close my eyes, and spend my days looking
for freedom through my sense of the smell.

desde que tefuiste

Jack Little

en la mesa hay un calendario viejo y sé que
sus meses ya no saben cantar de posibilidades,
sus días silban de una vaciedad de cruces rojos
marcándolos momentos lejos de ti.

Días congelados – cada sustantivo del tiempo
fue un sacrificio desde nacerse desafinado,
mishuellas son dibujos sucios, debajo del reloj...
el tic-tac del péndulo es un vértigo.

Hacemos ajustes a nuestros movimientos
para sentirse en control

tiraré el calendario mañana
después de cortar las fotos

cortarme de esta ausencia

since you left

Jack Little

Translated from Spanish by *Don Cellini*

there's an old calendar on the table
whose months no longer know how to sing of possibilities,
its days whistle from an emptiness of red crosses
marking the moments away from you.
Frozen days - each noun of time
was a sacrifice born out of tune,
my tracks are smudged drawings, under the clock ...
the ticking of the pendulum is a vertigo.
We adjust our movements
in order to feel in control.
I'll throw away the calendar tomorrow
after cutting out the photos
cut me out of this absence

A GRANDMA IN BIG BABANKI

(For my grandma and all grandmas)

Nsah Mala

By the roadside she stood,
stopping a taxi to church –
dressed in two-rope sleepers,
with a wrapper on her waist,
a headscarf on her head
and a third leg in her right hand.
Some of her grey hair laid outside
her headscarf, announcing
an age that could be numbered
with sand and dust and water.
This old mother boarded our taxi
and we helped her get in by my side.
We greeted and our taxi continued.
As I helped her hold her third leg,
– when entering and alighting –
I remembered my grandma, Veronica Teh,
who used to carry her farming nkok
on her back from Itinikum to Njinagwa,
sometimes happily barefooted yet with
shoes or two-rope sleepers in her nkok,
with her third leg too in her right hand.
She sometimes reserved ripe bananas
or avocados for us in her nkok
& would give us on our way to CBC Mbesa.
When for us there was no food,
she would untie one angle of her wrapper
and remove coins like 25 or 50 FCFA to give us,
especially me, for food.
Oh grandma, how I miss you!

Death cheated us and took you
when we were too young;
death snatched you from us
at an age few sticks can count!
We never saw her husband;
but she was a courageous widow
just like my mother later has been!
Same like my grandma, when this mother
alighted our taxi under about 10 minutes,
she untied a corner of her wrapper,
got 100 FCFA in coins for the driver
and branched off to PCC with other coins
to offer to God for her long life.
As she walked away to church,
again I remembered my grandma,
who was a fervent Baptist Christian –
faithful to God and our culture,
punctual, prayerful & generous to a fault.
She was a human library, a moving shelf
filled with wisdom and tales for us.
She would keep her money, nabak
and other valuables in empty milk tins.
I would collect avocados and give her
to keep so they get ripe and start
demanding them same day; she would
scold me, promising never to keep
my avocados again and would receive
me with open arms the next second!
Oh grandma, how I miss you!
Wherever you are, thanks for your love!
(Perpignan, 29 December 2016)

Credit: This poem was first published in Nsah Mala's Constimocrazy: Malafricanising Democracy (Pski's Porch, 2017).

UNA ABUELA EN BIG BABANKI

(Para mi abuela y todas las abuelas)

Nsah Mala

Translated from English by *Ricardo Felix Rodriguez*

Ella estaba al lado de la carretera,
parando un taxi para ir a la iglesia -
vestida en pijamas,
con una bata en la cintura,
un pañuelo en la cabeza
y una tercera pierna en su mano derecha.
Un poco de su cabello gris salido hacia afuera
su pañuelo, anunciando
una edad que podría ser numerada
con arena y polvo y agua.

Esta vieja madre abordó nuestro taxi.
y la ayudamos a ubicarse a mi lado.
Nos saludamos y nuestro taxi continuó.
Mientras la ayudaba a sostener su tercera pierna,
- Cuando entrar y baja -
Recordé a mi abuela, Veronica Teh,
que solía llevar su nkok de cultivo,
en su espalda desde Itinikum a Njinagwa,
a veces felizmente descalza o con
zapatos o pijamas en su nkok,
con su tercera pierna también en su mano derecha.
A veces reservaba plátanos maduros
o aguacates para nosotros en su nkok
Y nos daría camino a CBC Mbesa.
Cuando no había comida para nosotros,
ella desataría un extremo de su bata

Credit: This poem was first published in Nsah Mala's Constimocrazy: Malafricanising Democracy (Pski's Porch, 2017).

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o aguacates para nosotros en su nkok
Y nos daría camino a CBC Mbesa.
Cuando no había comida para nosotros,
ella desataría un extremo de su bata

y sacaba monedas como de 25 o 50 FCFA para darnos,
 especialmente a mí, por la comida.
 ¡Oh abuela, cómo te extraño!
 La muerte nos engañó y te llevó
 cuando éramos muy jóvenes;
 la muerte te arrebató de nosotros
 ¡A una edad que pocos palillos pueden contar!
 Nunca vimos a su esposo;
 pero ella era una viuda valiente
 Como mi madre más tarde lo ha sido!
 Igual que mi abuela, cuando esta madre encendió nuestro taxi en
 unos 10 minutos,
 ella desató un extremo de su bata,
 reunió 100 FCFA en monedas para el conductor.
 y se ramifico a PCC con otras monedas
 para ofrecer a Dios por su larga vida.
 Mientras se alejaba rumbo a la iglesia,
 otra vez recordé a mi abuela,
 quien era una ferviente cristiana bautista-
 Fieles a Dios y a nuestra cultura,
 Puntual, devota y generosa hasta cierto punto.
 Ella era una biblioteca humana, un estante móvil.
 Llena de sabiduría y cuentos para nosotros.
 Ella guardaría su dinero, nabak
 Y otros objetos de valor en latas de leche vacías.
 Yo recolectaría aguacates y se los le daría
 para quedárselos para que maduren y comenzarán a
 pedirlos el mismo día; ella me
 regañaría, prometiéndome no quedarse nunca
 con mis aguacates de nuevo ¡y me recibiría con los brazos
 abiertos al siguiente segundo!
 ¡Oh abuela, cómo te extraño!
 Donde quiera que estés, ¡gracias por tu amor!
 (Perpignan, 29 de diciembre de 2016)

*Crédito: Este poema se publicó por primera vez en Constimocrazy de Nsah
 Mala: Malaffricanising Democracy (Pski's Porch, 2017).*

COLLAGE

Kiuder Yero Torres

*Todo esto que me asalta de improviso
como un gato.*

JUAN M. ROCA

A la hora del tren
los aromas me recuerdan volver atrás.
Ayuno la costumbre la soledad.
El tiempo roza el oficio de las páginas
arroyuelos de la ciudad juegos de agua
 grietas en cada muro
pisadas vuelven y vuelven a la memoria
parte visible del sueño rincones del alma.

Los ancianos amanecieron frente a las noticias
la espera ilumina el sol de la locura
a esta hora de poca luz
 nadie ve la muerte patrullar
disparando sombras flechas
 en busca de un cuerpo.
Alguien sintoniza un radio de canciones viejas
la mañana se filtra por las rendijas.
Somos la servidumbre del paisaje
 el jardín vestido de sequía.

A la hora del tren
alguien recuerda mis pastillas
 recuerda el humo
vuela vuela sin miedos
las plantas sobre el tocador
y salgo de otra crisis

a pesar de las prohibiciones.

ARGUMENTOS

Kiuder Yero Torres

*y me escondo
en ese gran poema sumergido
que bucea en mi angustia.
PURA DEL PRADO*

No resisto en azar el viento de mi país. Hace sonar las puertas en los balcones de mi naufragio. Sobrevuelan el paisaje. Los pájaros se posan en la ventana como palomas mensajeras sin sueños. Mi padre enferma desde la habitación con la quietud de su gorro de jardín. Es ridículo pensarlo. Canta la angustia de quien surca las horas con la demencia propia de apagar las flores y sembrar el fuego.

a pesar de las prohibiciones.

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TENGO EL MAR

Kinder Yero Torres

apretado
mordiendo la costumbre
la luz crece como río de fuego
raíces de un ser que ruega por la lluvia.

Los dedos se confunden al acariciar
taladran mis costillas
como gusanos del tiempo
en los caminos de una ciudad
donde fluyen las cenizas
y nacen manantiales
en las hendiduras del amanecer.

La voz no ha sido vencida
espera himnos
el aliento lleva el calor
de una nueva primavera.

One Day in History...

Kariuki wa Nyamu

Granny says
a day is coming
when Israeli and Palestine
will walk shoulder to shoulder.
She says, Hutus and Tustis
will sleep under one roof.
The Hindus and Roman Catholics
will worship in one podium
and the Buddhists will do the procession!
Granny says,
Khartoum and Juba will dine in one table
as Abyei dances gleefully in hot day sun.
The Agikuyus and Luos
will become best of political friends
and America will not be harmed
when she erects a tent in the heart of Saudi Arabia
and on Mount Kirinyaga, Ngai's sacred dwelling,
there'll be nothing evil,
as the semi-arid plains of Mwea,
the grazing fields of Snr. Chief Njega wa Gioko's livestock,
will be turned into Fertile Crescent,
full of great yields
just like the Indian Ocean is full of waters
and that will be
as granny says
One day in History...

Un día en la historia ...

Kariuki wa Nyamu

Translated from English by *Ricardo Felix Rodriguez*

Abuelita dice
se acerca el día
cuando Israel y Palestina
Caminen hombro con hombro.
Ella dice, Hutus y Tutsis.
Dormirán bajo el mismo techo.
Los hindúes y los católicos romanos
adorarán en un podio
¡Y los budistas harán la procesión!
Abuelita dice
Khartoum y Juba cenarán en una mesa
Mientras Abyei baila jubilosamente en un día caluroso de sol.
El Agikuyus y Luos
se convertirán en los mejores amigos políticos
y América no será lastimada
cuando ella erija una tienda de campaña en el corazón de Arabia
Saudita
y en el monte Kirinyaga, la morada sagrada de Ngai,
no habrá nada malo,
como las llanuras semiáridas de Mwea,
Los campos de pastoreo del señor en jefe del ganado Njega wa
Giokos ,
será convertido en un creciente fértil,
lleno de grandes rendimientos
Al igual que el océano Índico está lleno de aguas
y eso será
como dice la abuela
Un día en la historia ...

Raíces 3

Luis Antonio Chávez

Mis raíces vienen de otras lluvias
traen la fuerza de la arcilla
que sabe al grito cimentado desde siempre.
En mis venas
llevo impresa la sangre pipil
por eso me vistieron
de soles milenarios...
¡un torrente de vida
llevo tatuados en cada vena!
¡soy el roble que el vendaval
no pudo derribar!
mi cuerpo
tiene el carisma
del maíz de la raza
por eso la bruma no me asusta
he aprendido a guiarme
con el brillo de las estrellas
la luna, fiel amiga del insomnio
ha acompañado mis noches de fatiga
he aprendido a convivir
junto a la desesperanza
aunque me duela
el silbo de la noche y sus cuchillos
la mirada furtiva
de los cadáveres ambulantes
los lienzos del pintor
añorando una pared para sus colores
me hiere esta ciudad sin rostro

los muertos que llenan calles y avenidas...
por eso
que viva el trueno
la lluvia
el güiro
el canto
el grito
surgido desde las hogueras del tiempo
que viva el humus mezclado con las flores
porque mis raíces
se fundirán con la nueva estirpe
que ya visualiza otra aurora...

¡Ay poesía, sólo tú nos salvas!

Tinajas de recuerdos

Luis Antonio Chávez

Traigo en la alforja
tinajas de recuerdos
añejas huellas
donde anclé puertos
soy el verbo
que calzó sombras y angustias milenarias
el hombre
que aprendió a deletrear
el lenguaje de las amapolas
cuando los ríos nos alimentaban
con cangrejos camarones y pescados
o recogíamos los frutos
que la madre natura nos daba
eran tiempos
en que una madeja de preguntas
salpicaban mis sienes
era cuando escuchaba los ecos del silencio
y entonces desperté
me volví verbo canción luna sol río
absorbí los gritos de las piedras
hasta descubrir
la comunicación de los reptiles
por eso
cuando una piel se conjuga con el maíz
veo el reboso de la abuela
y mi canto traduce el aroma de las flores
el llanto llorado de los ríos
la lágrima ausente del abuelo
la tierra añorando lo fértil de su vientre
al dichoso fui rasgando su tristeza

abro mi voz adolorida
despierto los caminos desandados
y caen como granizos las palabras
más comprendo que mi verbo es una hendidura
en el hueco de los años
y sólo pronuncio las palabras
escritas en el libro de la vida
“venid a mí los que estéis trabajados y cansados
que yo os haré descansar”

Raíces

Luis Antonio Chávez

Traigo
un ramaje
de recuerdos
tatuados en la piel.
Soy el portavoz
de la palabra
tallada
en las alforjas.
Mi verbo
tiene el carisma
de la raza
que aprendió
-sin estudio científico
A leer el cosmos
y supo descifrar
el canto del Torogoz
cuando los caminos
se iluminaban
con candiles...
Con el tiempo
comprendí
que más de algún abuelo
fue chamán cacique o guerrero
porque la bruma no me asusta
ni el cascabeleo del reptil
escondido bajo las piedras...

1 de mayo de 2008

A Drop of Peace

Sibusiso Ernest Masilela

Inside a cave of moth and creeping ants
Where dark sun meets mystic moon
We see life in ebony and ivory
Yet still we all dream in colour

Where have we left our erudite heartbeat?
That alters obnoxious to magnanimous
Who do we fool, baffle or excite?
Being opposing sides of a complete face

Our children are crying in the shadows
For a single drop of peace that is dying
Stop guessing, just think! We have lost it
As we battle between mind, body and soul

Hands lifting callous blades of ignoble clamor
Leaving stains of dripping blood on barren soil
Cracked floors weeping and begging for end of struggle
And a mirage of ancient walls illustrates satires and epics

The Gaza strip and Kinshasa cudgeled by war
Streets of Kosovo and Beirut awakes an old memory
Poppelen has kept the mist on our glossy eyes
Our villages are all burned and turned into ruins

Our orchards now look like depilated minefields
Adam and Eve had stolen the keys of Eden -
Closed steel gates and left us on this pandemonium
Pilgrim men and women enchanting behind the curtain

Our long prayers trapped by rooftops and window blinds
And our hearts sealed for neither fear nor feeling,
Between victory and defeat, I choose none -
Escaping second hand dreams of misery or nightmare

Perpetrator or victim we all end up deceased or widower
Our families and accomplices left internal bleeding
Condemned or confused on who's side they are on
Each day they watch seeds of detestation slowly grow -
Poured by either genocide or vengeance

Our children are crying in the shadows -
For a drop of peace, we pray that it reigns tonight.

Una gota de paz

Sibusiso Ernest Masilela

Translated from English by *Ricardo Félix Rodríguez*

Dentro de una cueva de polillas y hormigas reptantes.
Donde el sol oscuro se encuentra con la luna mística.
Vemos la vida en ébano y marfil.
Aun así todos soñamos a color.

¿Dónde hemos dejado nuestro latido erudito?
Que altera de lo desagradable a lo magnánimo.
¿A quién engañamos, desconcertamos o excitamos?
Ser el lado opuesto de una cara completa.

Nuestros niños están llorando en las sombras.
Por una sola gota de paz que está muriendo.
Deja de adivinar, ¡solo piensa! Lo hemos perdido
Mientras luchamos entre mente, cuerpo y alma.

Manos que levantan hojas insensibles de innoble clamor.
Dejando manchas de sangre que gotean en suelo árido
Pisos agrietados llorando y rogando por el fin de la lucha
Y un espejismo de muros antiguos ilustra sátiras y epopeyas.

La Franja de Gaza y Kinshasa son amordazados por la guerra.
Las calles de Kosovo y Beirut despiertan un viejo recuerdo
Poppelen ha mantenido la niebla en nuestros ojos brillantes.
Nuestros pueblos han sido todos quemados y convertidos en ruinas.

Nuestros huertos ahora se ven como campos de mina depilados.
Adán y Eva habían robado las llaves del Edén.
Puertas de acero cerradas y nos dejaron en este pandemonium.
Peregrinos hombres y mujeres encantando detrás de la cortina

Nuestras largas oraciones atrapadas por techos y persianas.
Y nuestros corazones sellados ni por miedo ni por sentimiento,

Entre victoria y derrota elijo ninguna -
Escapando de sueños de segunda mano de miseria o pesadilla.

Perpetrador o víctima todos terminamos fallecidos o viudos
Nuestras familias y cómplices dejaron sangrado interno.
Condenados o confundidos respecto al lado en que están
Cada día ven crecer lentamente semillas de odio -
Vertido ya sea por genocidio o venganza.
Nuestros niños están llorando en las sombras -
Por una gota de paz, rezamos para que reine esta noche.

HIJOS DE LA TIERRA

Marianella Sáenz Mora

Somos el agua
que al final de la cascada,
se convierte en arcoíris,
corriendo insubordinados,
tierra adentro
libres y salvajes
salpicados de inquietudes
y del susurro del árbol
desprovisto de la codicia del silencio.

Somos la quietud ondulante
y transparente
interrumpida solo
por el manatí sinuoso de la dicha.

Somos los que contemplan
la sincronía majestuosa
con que la libélula va hasta el río
y bebe golpeando el agua
observada por los ojos de mil aves
que cantan mimetizadas
con la caricia siempre verde del follaje
y su esperanza.

Somos
la cautela manchada
que camina agazapada entre las sombras,
somos la huella impresa en la arena
custodia el agua
que camina rodeado de piedras-abuelas

y sus pieles escarificadas de petroglifo.

Somos testigos del zumbido de la abeja,
convocatoria del misterio y la fragilidad
que sostienen el equilibrio de la vida.

Germinamos sueños
en los poros de la brisa,
seguimos el camino del sol y de la luna
hacemos cantar la flauta, el teponaztle y el yembé
coloreamos de entusiasmo el colibrí
y su algarabía de amapola
moldeamos la arcilla
acariciándola con el tacto humedecido
teñida por el color
del alma de las caracolas.

Somos las cuerdas que vibran
con la luz,
las hojas que se columpian en el viento,
epífitas del universo capturando la vida
somos el misterio y las constelaciones
antepasados de maíz rojo
los que enmudecen
al escuchar la voz furiosa del trueno
y aspiran fragante,
el olor de la primera lluvia
¡somos los rebeldes y caprichosos hijos de la Tierra!

CHILDREN OF THE EARTH

Marianella Sáenz Mora

Translated from Spanish by Gabriel Rodriguez

We are the water
that becomes the rainbow,
at the end of the waterfall.
As we insubordinately run
deeper into the land
wild and free
splashed by the uncertainties
and the whisper of trees
that lack the greed of Silence.

We are the translucid
waiving stillness
that is only interrupted
by the sinuous sea cow.

We are those who behold
the majestic synchronicity
through which the dragonfly goes to the river
to drink of the now unsettled water,
all while being watched by the eyes of a thousand birds
who sing mimicked
under the evergreen caress of the foliage
and its hope.

We are
the stained cautiousness
who walks crouching among the shadows,
We, footprints, lying in the sand
keepers of water
walk surrounded by ancestrying stones
skin that bears the scars of the petro glyphs.

We are witness to the humming of the bee,

summoning of mystery and fragility
that holds the balance of Life.

We sprout into dreams
into the pores of the breeze,
We follow the paths of the sun and the moon
we sing to the flute, the teponaztli and the djembe
we color the hummingbird the color of enthusiasm
and the poppy of its hubbub
we model out of clay,
caressing it with humid touch
dyed with the color
of the soul of the sea shells.

We are the strings
vibrating in the light,
the leaves that swing into the wind,
epiphytes of the universe that captures life
we are the mystery and the constellations
red corn ancestors
who grow mute
after listening the furious voice of the thunder
and aspire the fragrant
scent of the first rain in spring
we are the rebellious and capricious children of the earth!

ENUMERACIÓN DEL AMBIENTE

Marianella Sáenz Mora

Tu aliento
vuela por el verdor de mis cumbres
y las preña de luz,
en tanto que las ocarinas ansiosas
de tus manos me cantan ,
mañanas de garzas blancas y silentes
volando sobre las faldas azules del viento.

Ocelote que camina de puntillas
tras tu aroma,
busco siempre en los verdores,
la proximidad fecunda de tu boca
donde renuevo con locura mi esperanza
y mi piel.

Simbiosis,
ciclos furtivos del amante:
el huerto sin tiempo de tu cuerpo
descontando lo andado tras tu tacto de arcilla,
en medio de esta diversidad
de tonos fríos en la paleta silvestre.

Listing the Environment

Marianella Sáenz Mora

Translated from Spanish by *Gabriel Rodríguez*

Your breath
flies over the greenness of my summits
impregnating them with light,
in the meantime the anxious ocarinas
of your hands play the song that I am,
mornings of silent white herons
fly over the blue skirts of the wind.

Tip toeing ocelot,
behind your scent
I always seek in the greenness
for the fertile proximity of your mouth
where I can madly renew my hope
and my skin.

Symbiosis,
furtive cycles of the lover,
timeless orchards of your body
untelling the trace of your touch of clay,
in the middle of this diversity
of cold shades in the wild color palette.

SOY PARTE DE UN ÁRBOL

Rodolfo Sánchez Garrafa

Soy parte de un árbol cada vez más frondoso
El viento sacude mi copa llena de nuevas
Hojas de brotes que insinúan flores.
En lo profundo entierro mis brazos ondulantes
La humedad del suelo me recuerda el canto
De la lluvia el aliento cálido de esta mitad del año
Me habla del Sol insomne en el espacio sideral.
Alguien talló un corazón en la corteza de mi
Tronco y otros grabaron nuevos corazones
Al sumarlos obtuve un trébol de cuatro cuerpos
Tierna es aun mi madera tiernos mis sentimientos
Tengo muchos ojos todos necesarios
Con unos miro el mundo interior el de las semillas
Y de las danzantes partículas subatómicas
Con los ojos de mi mullida frente en cambio
Puedo ver las avecillas que mis ramas cobijan
Todo ser que vuela o surca los cielos y más allá
De las nubes por las noches cuento las estrellas
Hasta quedar absorto en mis propios pensamientos.
Soy parte de un árbol casi centenario y no se extrañen
De verme andando hago muchas más cosas
Mis partes son autónomas de cuando en vez se reportan
A sus raíces se desplazan migran forman su propio
Árbol crecen son podadas en ocasiones sacrificadas
Al amparo de extraños ritos
Soy parte de un árbol pensante interesado en conocer
El origen y destino de las especies que componen
La genealogía vegetal
Toda una vida he considerado que en la inmensidad
De este misterioso y bellísimo cosmos

Debe haber otros mundos poblados por árboles
Cuyos bosques no son talados
Por seres inferiores.
Se me ocurre que Dios en su infinita sabiduría
Es una planta inmortal ubicua
Y omnipotente
Qué bello es ser parte de un árbol ser raíz
Rama hoja flor fruto semilla
Y cuando se muere de pie qué bella
Es la belleza del árbol infinito.

Nacer del agua

Rosy Evelin Lima

Nacer del agua
fue un horror en vida.
Nacer de carne fue sencillo,
los brazos carnosos
de unas entrañas blandas
me dieron la pauta,
el corazón de mi madre
me hablaba del futuro.
Moví mi masa de sirena,
desprendiéndome como fruto
con arrojo, con peso de fauna
biennacida, fluida y suave,
cubierta de miel.
Nací niña axolotl de manos cerradas,
piel de ópalo,
mi lengua diminuta como hoja de lava
le dijo al mundo 'he nacido'.
Nacer del agua
fue un horror en vida
una pesadilla que reviste mi conciencia.
Estaba en el río,
mi cuerpo de mujer blanda
se aferraba a un hule negro.
Por debajo sentía su corriente como garras,
dientes de coyote que me devoraban la dignidad,
entraba el agua verdosa por las ventanas
de mi corazón de semilla.
El fluido de odio por el cual cruzaba
me ahogaba la identidad,
perforándome.

Antes de entrar, yo era lucero de aurora,
el río me fue apagando la llamarada naciente
de mi boca diáfana,
ahora cerrada, ahora foránea, ahora intrusa.
Nacer del agua
fue un horror en vida
fue arrancarme de un cenagal
que me tragaba,
enterrar las uñas
entre espinas y raíces
para alcanzar la luz del sueño,
la luz que no existe.
No he podido secar
el líquido de angustia
anegado en mi mirada.
Soy oscura, nací del agua
y de la carne
pero mi canto de gota
hoy crece,
mi hambre de sol
es insaciable,
y el próximo parto
será de fuego.

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"Born of Water" in "Number 2" in the "Mexican Poetry Series" edited by Jack Little*

Born of Water

Rossy Evelin Lima,

Translated from Spanish original version titled "Nacer del agua" by Don Cellini

To be born of water
was the horror of my life.
To be born of flesh was easy:
fleshy arms and
some soft innards
set the standard.
My mother's heart
spoke of the future.
My mermaid form moved,
detaching like brave
fruit, the weight of a well-born faun,
soft and smooth,
covered in honey.
I was born a salamander, closed hands,
opaque skin,
my tiny tongue like a leaf of lava
that said to the world "I am here."
Being born of water
was a horror in life,
a nightmare that my conscience revisits.
I was in the river
my body a soft woman
floating on a black rubber raft.
From below I felt the current like claws,
coyote teeth that devoured my dignity,
the green water entered through the windows
of my heart of seed.
The fluid of hate that I crossed
smothered my identity,

perforating me.

Before entering, I was a dawn-bright star,
the river began extinguishing the nascent flare
of my diaphanous mouth,
now closed, now foreign, now interloper.

To be born of water
was the horror of my life,
was to tear me from a quagmire
swallowing me,
burying my fingernails
between thorns and roots
to reach the light of a dream,
a light that does not exist.

I cannot dry up
the liquid anguish
flooding my vision.

I am dark, born of water
and of flesh
but my drop of song
grows today,
my hunger for sun
is insatiable.

Next time,
I will be born of fire.

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El agua de Esperanza

Rosy Evelin Lima,

El jueves estuvimos en Esperanza,
ella es bella, tan tranquila.
Nos acaricia con sus olas, nos acoge,
ella es cálida, sus peces nos rodean
como si fuéramos sus hermanos
Su arena tan suave,
enterré mis manos en ella
y le pedí que me apretara fuerte
pero ella es muy tierna
no hizo más que mostrarme
la arena azul
que guarda para los que fuimos peces
y ahora nos creemos aves.
Esperanza es la consentida de Yemayá,
en ella duermo
y despierto en Tuxpan,
en ella duermo
y despierto de cuatro años
a un lado de mi abuelo
acostado en la arena
con su sombrero blanco en la cara.

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Esperanza's Waters

Rossy Evelin Lima

*Translated from Spanish original version titled "El agua de Esperanza" by
Don Cellini*

Thursday we were in Esperanza,
so beautiful, so tranquil.
She caresses us with her waves, welcomes us.
She is warm, her fish surround us
as if we were their brothers.
I bury my hands
in her soft sand
and I asked to be hugged tight
but the water is very tender
and she just showed me
the blue sand
that she keeps for those of us who were fish
and now believe ourselves to be birds.
Esperanza is the darling of Yemayá.
I sleep within her
and wake in Tuxpan,
I sleep in her
and wake up a four-year-old
beside my grandfather
lying on the sand,
his white sombrero on his face.

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edited by Jack Little*

Bahía Mosquito

Rosy Evelin Lima

Nos mecemos hasta dejar atrás la luz.
El cielo es una manta negra
cubierta de la arena blanca de *Sunbay*.
Nos mecemos y avanzamos como gotas de reloj.
Mis dedos se extienden
para tocar el agua tibia de la bahía,
mis dedos hacer nacer 300 millones de estrellas,
mi tacto hace que el agua arda
con una llama azul,
y bebo el agua con mi instinto de bestia,
porque soy devoradora de estrellas,
pero no sabe a magia
no me nacen constelaciones en el pecho,
el agua sabe a llanto
y mis manos incandescentes
apuntan hacia Puerto Ferro,
hacia el hombre de 4000 años
que escondió en esta bahía
la lámpara de resplandor,
la cofradía de azules,
la lumbrera diluida
que llena el alma de calma.
Sigo tocando,
sigo estallando
en la quietud de este fuego.
El calor de mi cuerpo llama a los peces
que dibujan a mi lado
un mapa laberinto,
mis dedos les responden
perdiéndose eternamente

en la libertad
que mis ojos
solo contemplan.
No me hacen falta.
Voy de regreso
hacia el ruido de polvo
hacia el mundo seco,
hacia una vida
que me mantiene en el lodo,
vuelvo al gris
que jamás obedece
el encantamiento de mis pasos
Vuelvo sin manos y sin ojos
pues se han quedado
en la eterna danza azul,
el laberinto fue solo una excusa.

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Mosquito Bay

Rosy Evelin Lima

Translated from Spanish original version titled "Bahía Mosquito" by Don Cellini

We rock until we leave the light behind.
The sky is a black blanket
covered with white sand from Sunbay.
We rock and move like sand in an hourglass.
My fingers stretch
to touch the warm water of the bay.
My fingers create 300 million stars,
my touch makes the water burn
with a blue flame,
and I drink the water with my bestial instinct,
because I am the drinker of stars.
It doesn't taste like magic.
No constellations are born of my chest.
The water tastes like tears
and my incandescent hands
point toward Puerto Ferro,
toward the 4000 year-old man
who, in this bay, hid
the splendid lamp,
the confraternity of blues,
the diluted luminary
which fills the soul with calm.
I keep touching,
I keep exploding
in the quietness of this fire.
The heat of my body calls the fish
that draw a labyrinthine map
beside me.

My fingers respond to them
losing themselves forever
in the freedom
which my eyes
only contemplate.
I don't need them.
I return
to the noise of dust
to the dry world
to my life
which keeps me in the mud.
I return to the gray
which never obeys
the enchantment of my steps.
I return without eyes
since they have stayed
in the eternal blue dance.
The labyrinth was only an excuse.

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DANZA NEGRA

Santiago J. Alonso

(poema para la liberación popular)

Ese negro y esa negra
que bailan
libres, incultos, incivilizados,
licenciosos, voluptuosos, hermosos
con todo el cuerpo y el alma
también
cantando, amando, saltando
inmorales, impíos, humanos,
humanísimos y animales
también
bellos, divinos, ejemplares, naturales
perfectos, saludables y estruendosos
abrazados y distantes
amorados, unidos
por la danza
lujuriosos, carnales y espirituales
también
sonoros, sonrientes
comunes, comunicados
con razón, con amor, con luz y sombra
también
hermosos y libres
son hijos
de un hombre y una mujer
que vivieron, amaron y murieron
encadenados.

SONETO DE SIETE COLORES

Santiago J. Alonso

Sangre de tu piel ensimismada
reflujo del tiempo entre los tiempos
cerro, quebrada y acuyico
de la vida, de la muerte y su silencio.

Fronteras de nosotros mismos
unidos, separados, malqueridos
tostados por un río enmudecido
mascamos la altura de las piedras.

¿Somos y no somos ese viento?
¿ese remolino de yuyos y sarmientos?
¿en dónde empieza termina su terreno,

su inmensa inmensidad de rojo y negro?
Estamos amarrados sin quererlo
por una cordillera de cimientos?

Humahuaca, 16/1/2006

(In) migrantes

Recaredo Silebo Boturnu

Si se imaginaran el poder de sus manos,
si se imaginaran el poder de sus mentes,
si supieran que ellos,
solamente ellos podrían traer luz, sol, luna y arcoíris a sus aldeas.

Si supieran y si se imaginaran todo eso,
no vendrían corriendo hasta aquí donde están siendo violentados
por el color de su piel.

Si supieran que el cayuco estaba perforado
y no tenía el motor suficiente carburante y consistencia
para llegar hasta aquí;
si supieran que caerían en cráteres mafiosas
y que en vez de abrazar a la mar, abrazarían a la muerte inoportuna,
a la muerte desnuda,
no saldrían de sus aldeas
y se darían el coraje de enfrentarse a la bravura de las circunstancias
porque no tienen almas de suicidas.
Schio, Italia, Junio 2017

Auto presentación

Recaredo Silebo Boturn

Todos somos personas. Independientemente de las circunstancias que nos rodean.

Fui y fuiste una mirada.

Fui y fuimos una caricia.

Fui y fuiste una gota tibia de espermatozoide abrazado a un ovulo fecundo.

Soy y eres una gota de agua fría y tibia.

Una célula enroscada en un tejido,

somos un grano de arena perdido en la orilla de algún océano,

una gota de sangre derramada en el asfalto,

eres y soy partícula vulgarizada en el universo.

Soy un rallo de sol perenne,

una hoja pendida,

una hoja caída, agraviada.

Soy un árbol invisible,

una raíz visible,

un tronco extendido.

No tengo nombre ni apellidos.

Soy un mundo diminuto,

un mundo infinito.

¡Ojala lográsemos pulverizarnos para convertirnos

en una ola de esperanza para los niños y niñas de aquí y de allá!

POEMA OFÓ

Soleida Ríos

No contra el dolor, contra el sufrimiento
no contra la ceguera, contra la rabia
no contra la necesidad, contra el imperio del deseo
no contra el enemigo, contra la enemistad
no contra la pequeñez, contra la disminución
no contra la imaginación, contra el exceso de fantasía
no contra el poder, contra el abuso de poder.

Antes que la defensa, la protección.

*Jamás golpea la muerte a una roca
y jamás corre un río hacia atrás.**

18 de junio, 2012

* Cita de la poesía yoruba. Rogelio Martínez Furé, *Poesía Anónima africana*.

PIES DE PALMA

Soleida Ríos

a Lorenzo García Vega, in memoriam
a Mario Rivas

Ni Reina
ni Roja
ni Sagú
ni Silvestre o de Monte
ni Palma Thrinax
ni Thrinax Multiflora o Miraguano
ni Thrinax Paviflora
ni Thrinax Rígida
ni Thrinax Lejeje
ni Urania o Rabanela
ni Vitchi
ni Arenga Sacarífera
ni Yarey
ni Yeaiba o de Guinea
ni Yuma (no descrita)
ni Yuraguano
ni Palma Erizada
ni Sin Espinas
Palma de Seda (Real). En Imías
Roystonea lenis León.

las palmas ay las palmas deliciosas

*

ay esa palma negra...

*

la palma sola, soñando

libre y sola

Tablas techos bastones catauros tercios...
para tabaco en ramas
manojos de palmito: cogollo y corazón nutrientes
fruto oleaginoso. Yo
palma de seda, elevada, coronada, descalza, inerme
flores sésiles, hojas pinnatisectas...

¿Quién o quienes fijan el precio de una palma?
¿Cuándo?

MANYÉ-MASÁ

Soleida Ríos

a Justa y Justo

Papo y Pablo Milanés (hunganés), en La Caridad

...aquí hay bebida y comida

Dossu, Dossa, Gemelos-Marassá

Mi vida está en las manos de Dios.

Gemelos, Gemelos

Dónde ustedes están comiendo.

¡Abobó...!

Bebimos ya la leche

comimos ya la carne de mamá

ya devoramos su sudor

mañana ya es mañana

mañana ya es mañana

mañana...

Las manos de mamá-África

lindas manos de mamá

muelen raíces

tubérculos

tubérculos

tubérculos...(is)

ya los tiene mezclados con pienso

pienso

pienso

pienso

harina de lindos bebés

para lindos lindos bebés

todos todos animales

mañana... mañana...

*Váyanse, Gemelos,
¡Gemelos del bosque, vuelvan a la floresta!
Váyanse Gemelos,
¡Gemelos del agua, vuelvan al agua!*

*Váyanse, Gemelos,
¡Gemelos de casa, quédense en casa!
Váyanse, Gemelos,
¡Gemelos de las encrucijadas,
permanezcan en las entradas!**

*Canto ceremonial, Joel James y otros autores: *El Vodú en Cuba*

CHARY GUMETA

*“Para los hermanos asesinados
en las guerras y masacres
genocidas y sin sentido.”*

Me dijo:
como no sabes leer
que lo haga el aire
y lanzo aquellos papeles
con imágenes y letras
sobre la fuerte ventolera.

Se escuchó un rayo
que cimbró la tierra,
y resucitó a la memoria.
Habló con palabras afiladas
que eran como cuchillos,
volvían a abrir dolorosamente la herida.
Un gran silencio abrazo a la tarde
nos reunimos todos alrededor de la lumbre,
teníamos que vernos las caras de tristeza
y llorar para no olvidar.

No había ningún recado importante
solo recomendaciones de la abuela
que se fue por el camino de las tempestades.

Hoy, sentimos frío,
el secreto se pierde para siempre:
Sabemos lo que es la muerte.

La caja de las borrascas evitamos abrirla

para no provocar una tormenta
y nos dañe más el corazón latente.
Todo es desolación
caminamos en silencio
cargando cuarenta y cinco sombras.

Yo la recuerdo,
jugaba con ella y su hermanita
sobre un piso azul que se parecía al mar;
a veces la traía en brazos
acurrucada como un “chuchito”
le daba comida mascada con sus dientes
para que fueran una sola
y no se separaran nunca.

De mi boca nacía un canto
que a ella le gustaba,
con sus manos,
jalaba las notas con que entonaba
y hacia un hilo de campanas
que sonaban con el viento;
nos reíamos tan fuerte que reverberaba la montaña,
corríamos lejos, sin rumbo,
hasta que nuestros pies se elevaban
y se emparejaban con el vuelo de las aves.
La felicidad no tenía nombre
solo vivíamos, brincábamos, jugábamos.

Vinieron los hombres con su rabia,
traían una bandera negra que semejava al odio
y salió fuego de sus manos,
de sus ojos,
gritaba, gritaban, gritábamos.

No hay lugar donde no se clavarán
las luces centelleantes hasta apagarse:
en los cuerpos, en la tierra,
en los perros, en las gallinas.
Sí, era fuego que volaba
con alas de demonio
y yo, agazapada bajo los cuerpos
perdí a aquellas niñas
con las que aprendí a ser pájaro,
ya no las vi.

Ellas y yo nos divertíamos,
ahora,
solo tengo a mi gato
y una luciérnaga escondida
que solo alumbra con los recuerdos.

“BOMBARDEO”

CHARY GUMETA

Se derrumbó tu vida junto a la casa
creíste que era el fin del mundo
bajo aquel estruendo hosco y seco.

Tus sentidos se hicieron espinas
y acicatearon las alertas de tu cuerpo
ante aquel movimiento telúrico.

Te quieres mover
el grito prensado en tu pecho te lo impide
te aprieta más que los pecados
que la angustia
que el miedo.

Una reacción tardía
espuelea tus costillas y huyes.

Corres con el tiempo sobre la espalda
pesa más que la vida
que tratas de salvar entre las manos.

El aliento falta
y sientes que debes guardarlo
para engañar a la muerte.

Todo tiembla
y las paredes se desmoronan
Ante tus ojos
caen por la humedad de la adrenalina
que exhala tu cuerpo.

Sigues corriendo
con la liebre del terror metido en tu cerebro
no sientes nada
ni los vidrios que pisas en el tropel incontrolable
ni los guijarros que caen sobre tu cabeza.

Falta poco
miras la luz al fondo del pasillo
todo está bien
te dices.

Llegas jadeante a la puerta
y por primera vez
tienes esa paz
que no has sentido nunca.

El camino que nos une

Clara Lecuona Varela

*“...hablo siempre contigo
hablas siempre conmigo a
oscuras voy y planto signos”*
Octavio Paz

I

Yo dibujo hasta el agua este mundo nuestro, real
y único
en la penumbra de las horas me pregunto por aquellos poetas
que nos pueblan solos y definitivos.

Reducidos como briznas miramos el horizonte
(el horizonte se hermana en sueños comunes)
Así permanecemos....
anclados en la palabra y la memoria
en el grito de cada uno de nuestros ancestros.

Estamos.
Y estar, es una palabra más que suficiente.

II

Quiero escribir un poema a mi hermano negro
a mi hermano amarillo
a mi hermano blanco.

No entiendo porque las personas
tenemos colores semejantes que otros hacen diferentes.

Miremos la naturaleza
ella conoce del hombre que camina
de la mujer que también lado a lado camina.

Por eso somos una gota detenida en el tiempo.

Miren la naturaleza: ella tiene el rosa, el violeta, el verde, el terroso, el azul.

Pero esos colores no nos signan a nosotros

Por eso pongo mi mano frente al pizarrón y borro el color de cualquier tiza.

Miren bien.

(Con cualquier mano)

III

...hablo siempre contigo en la noche y cuando amanece
hablas siempre conmigo a toda hora.. y no lo sabes.
O sí...y sólo lo presentes.

Vengo de otro tiempo de otras tierras.
Mi sangre es mora, europea, africana, caribeña.
Caminando voy por mis calles y tú, amigo que no conozco
también transitas por las tuyas.

Nuestros caminos se cruzan como el vuelo de un pájaro enorme.
Y aunque *a oscuras voy y planto signos*
A pesar de todos y de todo.

El sol seguirá saliendo para nosotros
por el mismo sitio.
En cuanto abrimos los ojos a la vida y amanecemos
para perpetuar nuestras palabras
en esta nuestra sangre
que fluye
como un río interminable en una misma vertiente.

Writing Grandmothers, Africa Vs Latin America Vol 2 is a continuation of cross-continental anthologies series, especially between African writers and Latin American writers. It takes on from where we left off with Experimental Writing, Africa Vs Latin America, Vol 1. This anthology has 6 nonfiction pieces, 10 fiction pieces, and 67 poems and translations of poems in two dominant languages in the two continents, English and Spanish. We have work of poets and writers from Honduras, Mexico, USA, UK, Cuba, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Chile Puerto Rico, Spain, Nigeria, South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Equatorial Guinea, and Ghana all collaborating around our theme of using the folktale or oral African story telling traditions in finding solutions to problems bedeviling the two continents, which we felt were as a result of colonialism and or post colonialism.

Escribiendo sobre nuestras raíces: África contra América Latina, Volumen 2 es una continuación de una serie de antologías entre escritores africanos y escritores latinoamericanos. Dicha colección parte desde donde la dejamos con Experimental Writing, Africa Vs Latin America, Vol 1. La presente publicación cuenta con 6 piezas de no ficción, 10 piezas de ficción y 67 poemas (y traducciones de poemas) escritos en los idiomas dominantes de ambos continentes: inglés y español. Recibimos trabajos de poetas y escritores de Honduras, México, Estados Unidos, Reino Unido, Cuba, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Perú, Argentina, Brasil, Chile Puerto Rico, España, Nigeria, Sudáfrica, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenia, Guinea Ecuatorial, y Ghana. Todos ellos colaborando en torno a nuestro eje temático; utilizar el cuento popular o las historias orales africanas para encontrar soluciones a los problemas que aquejan a los dos continentes, que consideramos fueron resultado del colonialismo y el poscolonialismo.

Tendai Rinos Mwanaka is a publisher, editor, mentor, thinker, literary artist, visual artist and musical artist with over 20 books published.

Rodríguez Ricardo Félix was born 1975 in Caborca, Sonora, Mexico. He studied psychology and has a Master's degree in social science with emphasis in health.



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